





THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES



ESHER



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

STRETTON.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY J. OGDEN AND CO..
172, ST. JOHN STREET, E.C.

STRETTON.

A Novel.

BY

HENRY KINGSLEY,

AUTHOR OF "GEOFFREY HAMLYN," "RAVENSHOE,"

ETC., ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18, CATHERINE ST., STRAND.

1869.

[*All rights reserved.*]



Rec 4-17-48

PR
4845
K58
v.3

STRETTON.

CHAPTER I.

So the Colonel and Roland let Jim go his own quaint way with his Nawab and his moon-shee, and went their own. Before many months were over, it became apparent that Jim was exercising an immense influence over the Nawab. The drag was discontinued; he was taught to ride. His Royal Highness likewise left off dressing himself in puce-coloured velvet and gold, white loose trousers, and patent-leather pumps, and came out in a neat costume, between English and Asiatic. He likewise smoked less, and rode harder, and what is more, liked it.

“I told you, Colonel,” said Roland, “that there was good in him. He will make a man of that Nawab.”

VOL. III.

B

553753

"He is a queer fellow," said the Colonel; "as mad as a hatter; but I suppose we must leave him alone. He is certainly making a gentleman out of the Nawab."

"What are the Nawab's antecedents?" asked Roland.

"Same as the rest of them," said the Colonel, yawning. "Married when he was twelve, and four times since. Now twenty-three. Spent all his time learning European languages and manners, and flying kites for a recreation, till a couple of years ago, when he took up with a kind of Orleans Anglo-mania. I dare say Mordaunt will make something of him. What is this building going on at his palace? That is a new kick."

"Jim and he are studying fortification together," said Roland; "and they are reducing it to practice."

"Well, he is a safe man," said the Colonel. "He might spend his money worse. I will go and have a look at these two fools. By-the-bye, Evans——"

"Yes, sir."

"You speak French?"

“Yes, sir.”

And the conversation, until Roland's departure, was carried on in that language, which had the very strange effect of causing the pun-kah over their heads to go faster and faster, as though with exasperation. The Colonel noticed it, and laughed.

“I wish you would go out and stick a pig for me, to-morrow.”

The Colonel looked at him so very straight that Roland only looked back again and said—

“Yes, sir.”

“Between this and Delhi it is only a hundred and forty miles.”

“And not a dozen pigs in the distance,” said Roland. “Yes, sir.”

“And put this cypher in your pocket, and let your horse run away ; and let him run away as far as Jellapore, where they will remount you ; and then let *that* horse run away as far as Bugapore, and they will give you a fresh horse there ; and let him run away with you as far as Delhi ; and give that cypher into L——'s own hands.”

“I see, sir.”

"If you are assassinated, I will see after your affairs. I don't *think* you will be, if you can get safe to Jellapore. Don't come back alone, but come with the 201st."

"I will obey your instructions, sir. I am very much obliged to you for this mark of confidence."

"Whoy! For the matter of that, I always pick out the best man for a dangerous and secret service with no possible chance of reward attaching to it. The compliment is quite mutual, I assure you. Ride in the open as much as possible till you are past Jellapore."

"Are our communications threatened already, sir?" asked Roland.

"I suppose that is more my business than yours, is it not?" said the Colonel, quietly. "What you have to do is to obey orders. Go to bed now, and slip off before day with a hog-spear. Do as you are told."

And Roland nodded, and turned to the door, when the Colonel called him back.

"Come, young man, I will trust you as far as this. They have learnt our cypher, and you are the first bearer of a new one."

“Are they going to move yet, sir?”

“Who knows? Who cares? It will all be the same. What was done before can be done again. Be careful of yourself. You are the best man I have, or I should not have sent you on this dangerous errand. You know, of course, that you will get no credit by it.”

“Good evening, sir,” said Roland, in *English*, laughing.

“Good evening, Evans,” said the Colonel, also in that language. “Mind you are not late for parade.”

And the Colonel went out into the verandah, and pleased himself by staring steadily at the punkah wallah, who had pulled the string so violently when he and Roland began to talk French.

And Roland went away to his errand; and before day broke, on his best Australian, dressed in the old Shropshire hunting-breeches, and boots, with a hog-spear in his hand, he had put a good twenty miles between him and Belpore.

These were the first days of it, when those who warned were not listened to. The end was not yet by any means.

On the very morning on which Roland had so innocently cantered out of Belpore with a hog-spear, and two running syces, blown and distanced very soon by the pace of his Clarence River bred Australian horse—on this very morning Jim was lying on his sofa, contemplating his beloved moonshee with greater satisfaction than ever. The moonshee had long before finished the “Contemplations of Dhalblat,” and indeed the modern Hindustani comedy of “Rumsi Door, the Cloth-Merchant of Jellalabad,” a work of great art, directed against the Mahomedans, but which has fallen dead in England, in spite of Captain Rollingsstone’s *most spirited translation*. The moonshee had finished these two on Jim’s head, and was beginning with the “Dhollery-bagh; or, Garden of Rupees” (a poor piece as to plot, but admirable for its Anglicised Hindustani). He was propped up on his haunches at one end of the room, and Jim was lying on his sofa at the other, contemplating him, and smoking.

The old moonshee’s knees were up to his nose, and his wise, good old face looked at Jim

from between them. He adjusted his great round spectacles, and began—

“It now becomes my duty to call the attention of the sahib to the ravages and dacoitees which his language has committed on mine,” when a voice in the doorway said—

“Come, old man, don’t talk about dacoitee. If we have altered your language for the better, we have at least rendered it possible for you to know the finest literature which the world has ever seen.”

And Jim, rising in astonishment, saw the Colonel before him.

The moonshee got off his seat, shut up his book with his spectacles in it, and salaamed. The Colonel said, hurriedly—

“Sit still, Mordaunt. Moonshee, go out and send those men away, and then come back to us.”

And the old man did so with rapidity and dexterity.

Jim, sitting upon his sofa, in his shirt and trousers, was a little dazed by these very sudden proceedings. Before he had time to say a few common-places to the Colonel, the

punkah was stopped, and the Colonel was sitting on one side of him and the old moon-shee standing on the other.

“Sit down,” said the Colonel, “and speak low.” And the moonshee sat down with a bow.

“James Mordaunt,” said the Colonel, *in French*, “I am a man who never refused the combat or the retractation where I thought either the one or the other thing was in any way necessary. I owe you the apology at the present. I owe you the apology because I doubted, on a recent occasion, the capability possessed by you of selecting acquaintances with discrimination.”

Jim said, in such French as he had got at Gloucester, that he was profoundly penetrated with the sentiments of Colonel the Commandant, and he couldn't have done better if he had tried.

“But you have shown—you—that you have power of selection enormously. I believed for a long time that you were vain and foolish; that your old friend, the moonshee, was rascal; and, again, old babbler; and, again, spy; and, again, once more, betrayer of deposed trusts;

but I have changed all these opinions. I have disclosed the very bottom of my heart to you on this business; and now we will speak English."

Jim, thinking it was the best thing they could do, if they wanted to talk sense, acquiesced without a murmur. And he was wondering idly how the French got through their business with such extremely florid language, when the Colonel began in his native tongue.

"That old man who sits beside you has rendered service to the Queen's Government which shall not be forgotten."

"Sahib," said the old man, "I desire nothing, take nothing, and will accept nothing. I think British rule is good for India, and my three boys have died for you. I have sown, and I will reap. It would be strange, I think, that a father who has lost three sons in a cause should turn against it at last."

"There spoke a *man*," said Jim, suddenly and loudly. "There spoke a man, Colonel. I know a man when I see him. You go into boat-racing, and you'll be able to do the same."

"Do you know what he has done?" said the Colonel.

"No," said Jim, "*I* don't know anything about him, except that I spotted him for a gentleman, and that he sits at one end of the room, and reads that balderdash, and I sit at the other and look at him. Whatever he has done is no harm."

"He has refused every offer of the Rajah of Bethoor, and has discovered for us that our cypher was discovered, and our despatches mutilated, and he refuses reward."

"It was little enough to do, sir," said the old moonshee. "Peace for India means merely a strong British Government. Ah, you don't remember the *old* days. I take my leave," and he went.

They watched him go. To Jim he had been a friend, and yet he had been a subject of an almost absurd contemplation. An abnormal, and consequently, to Jim's mind, in some sort an *absurd* creature. He was absurd in Jim's eyes no longer now; Jim knew, after this story of the Colonel's, why he had loved the old man instinctively, and without knowing it. The

quaint, fantastic old moonshee was a very noble person; Jim was a judge of men as far as his training went, and he had judged this good old man as honest from the first moment he saw him. And as he and the Colonel watched the good old man go fluttering down the sandy road towards the nullah and the patch of jungle beyond, Jim said to the Colonel, "There goes a good and honest man, sir," and the Colonel said, "You are right. Now I want to go with you to the Nawab."

Let us follow the old moonshee first. With his books at his breast, in fluttering white robes, he went down the long broad sandy road towards the nullah, towards the patch of dark green jungle beyond, towards his poor little bungalow, now empty for ever.

He had been married many times, this quaint old man, but all his wives were dead, and he was all alone. Daughters he had alive, but dead to him in zenanas. He had thought and read, this quaint old man, until he believed that he had thought through all recorded knowledge, and his thoughts had always been towards one solitary point—the good of India.

He was old enough to remember when he had resisted the British invasion in arms in his own person. But afterwards he had seen more and more hope in the British, and he had sent three sons to die for us. He saw more chances for good, day after day, in the British rule, and day by day he was strenuous to uphold it. Lastly, there had come to him a young man, also of the Indo-Germanic race, whom he chose to believe was the image of one of his own sons, and that young man was singularly enough Jim Mordaunt.

It is not to be supposed that Jim and he entirely confined themselves to Hindustani. They had a few talks together, and James had altered the old man's opinions with regard to the Nawab of Belpore, whom he had always considered as a young man without worth. Jim had altered his opinion somewhat. Jim thought highly of the Nawab; and the old moonshee was determined to make a greater acquaintance with the Nawab, and see whether, after all, there *was* anything to be made of an Indian gentleman.

He believed so far in the transmigration of

souls as to believe that our poor Jim from Shropshire was his own son. He had left all his little wealth to him. But leaving alone this superstition, there was more sense and reason under the turban of that old moon-shee than there is under ninety-nine out of every hundred beaver hats in England.

When he turned the corner and lost sight of Jim's bungalow, he turned, and on his way gave his blessing to Jim. Then he crossed the nullah and came beside the patch of jungle which lay between Jim's bungalow and his.

The good old man was turning all politics over in his head when he arrived here. There were few passing on the road, and the sand was heavy on his feet. At once, within the jungle, he heard the low wail of an infant. "It is a case of exposure," he said. "I will go and pick it up. I have none of my own; it may live to serve Hindustan."

And so the good old man, parting the thick, heavy, green leaves, left the sandy track, and turned into the jungle on his errand of mercy after the wailing infant.

CHAPTER II.

THE Nawab was excessively fond of billiards, but did not play well by any means. He had therefore looked round for a moonshee for billiards, as it was not very agreeable to be always beaten by Jim. And he had discovered one. Let us see who he was, and how he found himself in *this* queer out-of-the-way business.

How quaint this bringing together of England and India is! The great Squire Todhunter, of Cambridgeshire, rode eighteen stone, and, consequently, had to be horsed at the expense of nearly £500. Now, the Squire was a saving and discreet man, and he did not like his horses trashed unnecessarily. Consequently, in choosing a second horseman, he looked for the qualities of extreme smallness and extreme cleverness. He was very particular about this; and one day he got a letter

from Sir Gregory Dowes, to say that he had found him a treasure. The treasure was sent over for inspection, and into Squire Todhunter's library came one of the strangest little men the squire had ever seen—a handsome little lad, weighing six stone, and four feet high, very well dressed, like a gentleman, who seemed perfectly cool and unconcerned.

“Hallo, my lad, you are a flat-race rider ! That won't do, you know.”

“Never rode a flat-race in my life, and never mean to, sir ; certainly not, at my time of life.”

“How old are you, child ?” said Todhunter, liking the looks of him, and thinking he might be licked into shape.

“Thirty-one,” answered the child. “Married ; one son ; no other incumbrance. Wife takes washing when she can get it. Talk French and German ; but not Italian. In the stables of the Pasha of Egypt ; but didn't like it. Sober ; honest. Eight years' good character from the Pasha. Loves his horses as his horses love him. Used to a gentleman's place, or wouldn't be here.”

"Why, I thought you were a boy."

"So has many; but they found themselves deceived."

"Where are your wife and son?" said Squire Todhunter.

The little man went and rang the bell, and waited in cool silence till the footman came.

"Send up my wife and the boy, James," was all he said, after which he drummed on his hat.

Then there came up a very tiny woman, and a strange mite of a bright-eyed boy, about twelve, half the size of his father, who stared persistently at Squire Todhunter until that gentleman was uncomfortable, and the bargain was concluded.

"Can that boy ride?" said the Squire. "He would make a good feather-weight."

"He rides well enough, sir; but he has took to flat-racing and billiards; and I am busted, sir, if you'll excuse the expression, if the present turf business a'n't too much for *my* stomach. I'm a-going to send him to the Pasha of Egypt's stables, to improve his moral tone."

“That won’t do the boy any good,” said the Squire.

“Excusing me, sir, I know Cairo and I know Newmarket; and that boy’s a-going to Grand Cairo.”

The Squire gave some sensible advice, but it was not taken by this wonderful, resolute, little cross-country rider; and the boy went East, and East again, for ten years, winning flat-races, on sometimes hopeless horses, sending the large sums he earned home to his father, to be invested in the funds (which was scrupulously done for him), and paying his travelling expenses by billiards and safe betting. He was at Bombay, and thought he would go to Australia; but then again thought he would go to Calcutta. And at Calcutta he heard of the Rajah of Belpore and his horses; and so he went up and looked in on our Nawab.*

Our Nawab was immensely flattered at the visit of such a distinguished young man. He at once allotted him apartments and money. When he found that Billy Lee could play billiards, he instantly sent to the right-about a

* All this is almost exactly true.

tipsy, cashiered old captain, his previous instructor, and installed Billy Lee in his place.

Jim Mordaunt had, of course, met Billy Lee, and disliked him extremely. For Roland, he had never given two thoughts about him ; only once called him a rascally little renegade.

The Colonel scarcely knew of his existence. It was, therefore, not very pleasant when the Colonel, and Roland, and Jim rode into the Nawab's courtyard, to hear this young man's voice in high conversation with the Nawab, during the clicking of billiard balls.

But they heard what he said before they went in at the window.

"I tell your Royal Highness that it is horses, and all horses, with them. Your horses should be brought inside this fortified compound, or else, in what is going to happen, you will let 'em go to the enemy. Did you ever hear me talk Hindustani ? "

"No," said the Nawab ; "you can't talk it."

At this moment our three friends entered the billiard-room. They were confronted by the little jockey billiard-player, and noticed him closely for the first time.

A bright, handsome, resolute little fellow enough, and not a bit afraid of them. He struck out at them at once in French.

“His Highness says I cannot talk Hindustani. Me, who was three years in Bombay. I can talk it fast enough; and I lie in my bed at night and hear them talking; and their talk is mischief and devilry, which things I hate. I am no renegade, Lieutenant Evans, as you have called me. I am an Englishman to the backbone; but *n’importe*. Cornet Mordaunt, I have something very particular to say to you.”

Such a gallant little figure standing in front of such a strange group! The jockey was a little tiny dandy, whose head reached to one of Jim’s waistcoat-buttons. The Colonel was in scarlet and white; Roland, Jim, and the Nawab in simple close-fitting white—a solemn group. But the little jockey was not a bit afraid of them.

“Colonel,” he said, “I have been giving advice to his Highness which I think you will approve. You will hear what I have said from him. Cornet Mordaunt, I was just coming

over to your bungalow, to say a word or two to your good old moonshee, if you would allow it. You and I know a brick when we see one."

"I fear you will not find him there," said Jim, greatly pleased by this mention of his old friend. "The Colonel came in, and I sent him away."

"Not home. Don't say home," said the little jockey, sharply.

"Yes," said Jim, quietly. "We saw him walking down the road homewards."

"But I thought he always stayed with you till late at night, and often all night in your bedroom, reading to you when you were restless?"

"He is gone home to-day," however, said Jim still more quietly.

The jockey uttered a great oath. "Get your horses, gentlemen. I wouldn't have had this happen for a thousand pound. And I playing billiards there! Come along, in God's name."

He was first on his horse, and sped away out of the Nawab's compound. Jim was second, and rode as hard as he could to the

good old man's house. There was nothing there but a very old woman, who was boiling rice in a pipkin, and stirring it round and round with a stick. And when Roland brought his horse half-way into the bungalow, and asked her if the old man had come home, she said "No," and spat at him. For she was our moonshee's mother, and most devoutly believed that the world was so governed by the great God that her son would be sent to everlasting torment, by losing caste in consequence of sitting in the room while Jim was eating bacon to his breakfast. But you must respect their prejudices, such as suttee, for example, if you are consistent. Jim rode off hard, and found the others on the sandy road, in front of the patch of jungle which lay between Jim's bungalow and the moonshee's.

Here there was a very old lean man in leg-irons, a convict, who was pounding on the road with a rammer, and had nothing on but a pair of drawers and a turban. When Jim rode up, the old gentleman had got his rammer between his knees, and had his withered old arms stretched out before him, with the palms

of his hands close together, after the Indian manner. Those withered palms were stretched alternately from one sahib to another. "Colonel Sahib, sir, he did not go by here; Jockey Sahib, sir, I did not see him; Lieutenant Sahib, sir, I will tell all I know; Nawab Sahib, plead for me;" and so the poor ironed old convict went on with helpless, hopeless lie after lie until Jim rode up, and giving his bridle to the jockey, went up to the poor trembling old man, and put his two hands on his shoulders.

"Old man," he said in Hindustani, looking down into his face, "we have missed some one whom we love. Tell us all about it."

It was strange beyond measure to see the splendid young Englishman looking down into the face of the poor old lying Indian convict. England and India face to face. That love which the best of our men have for extremely old people told here. There is a kind of royal arch-masonry between the very young and prosperous and the very old and unfortunate. "I was like you once, and you may be as I am hereafter." This thieving and lying old Hindoo looked into Jim's honest face, and for

the sake of what he saw there, undid all his lies and told the whole truth.

“Sahib, he did not come so far as this. But he turned into the jungle there, and you can see his footprints in the sand. Lieutenant Sahib, I will speak all the truth. Lieutenant Sahib, the Rajah of Bethoor went by in his carriage, and he stood up and looked into the jungle. And then, sir, your moonshee came along with his book on his bosom, and there was the wailing as of a child in the jungle, and I knew that it would turn him, for he has a kind heart. And I would have called louder than I did, but durst not. And he passed in there, and I heard two shots.”

The party were awed enough now. The syces who had run after them had their horses, and they moved together towards the jungle, and passed into it, the little jockey first.

“Is there any one here who is afraid of seeing death?” said he, and looking round confronted the tall solemn Nawab.

“When you have seen the suttee of your own mother, as I did, sir, you will not ask that question of *me*.” And the sharp-tongued,

honest, clever little Cockney understood in his clear, good little brain the whole matter, nodded to the Nawab, with his head on one side, and went on.

Jim's poor old moonshee ! It was really very sad. He lay straight in their path, shot stone dead, on his face, with the book which he had last been reading to Jim crumpled up under his honest old heart ; a heap of snowy white amidst the dark greenery around. Jim did not mend matters by any means. He never thought that the old man was dead. He called out, " Baghobahar, most excellent and admirable of moonshees, sleeping in the forest of golden delight, get up and come home. We thought that we had lost thee, thou aged one."

Roland put his hands on his shoulders and said suddenly, " Hush, Jim, he is dead."

" Dead !"

" Assassinated."

" My moonshee ! Damnation ! Let me get at him. Assassinated by whom ?"

A very quiet voice said, " By the Rajah of Bethoor," and Jim knew that it was the Nawab

of Belpore who had spoken. These two young men looked at one another for a moment, and saw that they understood each other.

Jim was perfectly quiet after this one outbreak—far too quiet to please Roland. They picked the old man up and laid him on his back. His face was very quiet; he had been shot twice through the heart, while on his supposed errand of mercy.

The little jockey said, "I knew they had a plot for his life, after his giving information about the cypher. Why, I have laid in bed and heard them talk it over. I'll tell you why it is, gentlemen, that I have never let out my knowing of Hindustani; because I want to hear what is going to be done about the nobbling of horses. An unworthy motive. Let that pass. I knew that this would happen if the old man came home, but I thought he was always at the Cornet's bungalow."

Blurted out Jim, "The Colonel didn't like him at one time, and so he turned out when the Colonel came."

And the Colonel said, "That is perfectly true, in one respect. But it is not a thing which

should been said, and I like you the less for saying it just now, Mordaunt."

The jockey had picked up the moonshee's book, and had shaken it. Nothing dropped from it but a few loose papers and a photograph of Jim, which the jockey handed to him. The Colonel and Roland walked away together, lamenting over the accident. The Nawab and Jim remained behind, looking at one another over the dead body. Unless history is altogether the Mississippi of lies which Matthew Arnold says it is, you will find, I think, that when two members of the Indo-Germanic race get scowling at one another over the dead body of one whom they have loved,—it means mischief.

CHAPTER III.

JIM and the Nawab looked steadily at one another over the corpse for a little time, until the others were out of hearing. Then Jim said, steadily, "Are you with me?"

And the Nawab said, "To the death." And the two young men shook hands. "What shall we do?" said the Nawab. "You are of the conquering race, and should suggest. I will follow."

"Beat him up in his own quarters."

"Who?"

"The Rajah."

"But how?" said the Nawab.

"Will you follow me, and let me do the talking?"

"Of course I will. But it is terribly dangerous."

"Tigers are. Yet we kill them."

“Yes, but armed,” said the Nawab. “We are unarmed. Nevertheless, I will go with you. It is horribly dangerous. The crash is so near that we might precipitate it, and we have only your regiment here, and the two companies of the 201st, which came with Roland Evans, against five thousand native troops. But I will go.”

Jim only nodded. And the Nawab saw how India was conquered.

“Lee,” said Jim, “my good-hearted little fellow, get this poor body seen to for me.”

And the jockey said, “Yes, sir. But are you going to the Rajah’s palace?”

Jim said, “Yes.”

“I wouldn’t; but you know best. Here, you wallahs, all of you, come here. And while you are about it, you had better go and fetch half a hundred more. There is enough of you round somewhere.” And so Jim, giving one more look at his poor old friend, mounted his horse, and rode away with the Nawab.

I must for a few moments follow Roland and the Colonel.

Roland said, “This is a sad business.”

The Colonel said, "That a good old man, whom I, God forgive me, disliked, is gone to his God swiftly, with a smile on his face? I don't agree with you there."

"Jim, Jim! my dear sir," said Roland. "I am not one to behowl myself over the swift death of a good man after a well-spent life. But Jim. All the boys from our school are strange and fantastic, but our Jim was the most fantastic of us all. I love him, as you know. But I tell you that there is in Jim a vein of cruelty and ferocity. He half killed my own brother, but he is most unhappily in love with my sister, though he never opens his mouth on the subject. He loved, in his quaint odd way this old man, and I think that he has never looked on death before. I cannot be answerable for what he will do."

"My good lad," said the Colonel, "who ever said you could? We English are the oddest people on the face of the earth. The French have a notion of that, but their caricatures of us fail because we are utterly beyond any Celt who ever was born. I have commanded this regiment for nine years and I

have seen stranger fellows than your Jim. Have you tried religion with him?"

"He won't *talk* it," said Roland.

"I wish he would," said the Colonel. "I always know where to have a religious man. I am not what you may call deeply religious myself; but if I could get a regiment of religious men behind me — by Jove" — The Colonel was puzzled to go on. Words failed him. What he could do with a regiment of the men called in the service "Methodists," was too much for his brain. But he knew them, and so does English history.

"You tried him with High Church formulas?" said the Colonel.

"He was always used to them."

"I wish Havelock was nearer. I wish Havelock would take him in hand. Havelock has done wonders for some of our wildest ones. There's Willoughby again. By-the-bye, you saw Willoughby last week. Did he say anything odd?"

"Yes," said Roland. "He said something very odd indeed. He scarcely spoke to me at all during the necessary business of sending

the company here ; but he never left off looking at me. I did not know whether he liked me or not ; but when we parted he laid his two hands on my shoulders, and said, "You are a man who knows how to die."

"He said *that*, did he?" said the Colonel.

"And what did *you* say?"

"I said I was ready to die for England ; and he replied, 'For India, India. God has given us a great trust here, and we must carry it out.'"

"Just like him," said the Colonel. "That is the best young man in India. Did he say anything else?"

"No. Why?"

"Because, what he says is generally worth hearing," said the Colonel. "That is why. But about Jim Mordaunt. Can you prevent his making a fool of himself?"

"I never know what he will do for five minutes together," said Roland. "I had power over him once, but I have completely lost it. At one time he would do what I told him. Now my only way of influencing him is to ask him *not* to do the thing I want done.

Whereupon he does it at once. But he is getting up to *that* now."

Roland and the Colonel would have been much more anxious about Jim had they known of the strange errand on which he had set himself, and into which he had induced the Nawab, a longer-headed man than Jim, to follow him. Though the Nawab followed Jim, he had opinions of his own, and after his return from this ridiculous expedition, set all his people fortifying his palace under the tropical moon.

They cantered away towards the Rajah's palace, which stood on the summit of a rock, and they rode leisurely up to the gate, and through the gate, and through other gates, as far as they could go. Jim was the first European who had ever got so far. They went through court after court, and cloister after cloister, swarming with staring natives of all ages and sexes, diligently doing infinitesimally small things, and earning about three half-pence a day on an average.

Then they jumped off their horses, and left them to the grooms. And pushing on, the Nawab close to Jim, they came to a heavy teak

gate which entirely puzzled Jim. The Nawab put him aside.

“We will get in here,” said the Nawab : “we shall never get out again, but I will go to the devil with you. Put your foot in the wicket when it is opened.” And the Nawab knocked *nine* times.

“Why that number ?” whispered Jim.

And the Nawab explained it to him hurriedly. And Jim pulled a long face and said, “Well, this is Queer Street.” And the Nawab said “*It is.*” Said the Nawab, “You English fancy that you know India. Ha !”

The wicket was opened cautiously, which gave Jim the opportunity of pushing it wide open, and knocking the aged porter on the flat of his back. In another moment they had shut it again, and the Nawab and Jim stood alone and defenceless within the court-yard of a palace more unutterably given to the devil than possibly that of Heliogabalus.

One may distrust Suetonius, as one habitually does State papers, as being *ex parte*. But no man out of Bedlam can distrust the contemporary evidence about the state of Indian courts.

Jim from Shrewsbury, and the Nawab of Belpore, stepped swiftly on through a broad cloistered quadrangle, as nearly like a college quadrangle or court as need be, surrounded by cloisters; but deluged with floods of water in square pools.

I must cease here; I know too much to speak. Might we not, however, allow a little more liberty in the working of fiction?

Jim and the Nawab, however, held their heads in the air, and passed along the broad path which runs between the baths towards the awful, barbarous building which closed up the quadrangle on the farther side. It was a building in which every idea of art (as we know it; there may be art of which we know nought) was polluted and rendered abominable. I have no worse word to say against the Cotsea Bhang at Delhi, or the Mosque at Benares, than I have to say against the Mosque at Ispahan, (probably the greatest and purest thing in the world) or Contances Cathedral. I say that they are all exquisitely beautiful, but this building was an exception. It was like the great temple at Pegu; it was like the Pagoda

at Tanjore; it was like the Pavilion at Brighton; the walls of Jericho with the gates of Gaza.

“But see what we *can* do,” said the Nawab, laying his hand on Jim’s shoulder; “look there.”

Certainly there was a mosque to the left, with two minarets soaring into the summer air. Certainly Western art, called Gothic, had seldom produced anything so perfect. Certainly the two tall stalks of the minarets cast themselves aloft in the air, and branched out at intervals, like the *Equisetum*. Certainly even dull Jim got into his head that the builders of the present day were making rather a mess of it. But equally certain was it that the *other* building was before him, and that he was going to tell the Rajah a piece of his mind.

They went in under the dark, low, barbaric, doorway, the Nawab keeping his left hand on Jim’s shoulder and the right hand on his dagger. Jim was the first British officer who had ever entered that abode of sin and horror. The first long, cool corridor they entered was perfectly empty; but at the end of it, on a

flight of marble steps, was an old woman, who fled nimbly from them, in silence.

“ I will go first ; I have been here before,” said the Nawab.

And they passed on up the staircase, and through corridor after corridor of the building, now silent and deserted since the old woman’s alarm, until retreat became utterly impossible, as it seemed to the Nawab.

“ If he is *ready*,” said he to Jim, “ we are dead men. Here is the door. Shall we knock ?”

Jim gave no answer, but pushed it open.

Gilt looking-glasses, French china, Dresden china, Wedgwood, Minton, old Chelsea, Giotto, and Grindling Gibbons ; an expensive copy of the Madonna della Seggia, beside an evil photograph. Why go on ? One is not writing a catalogue for Christie and Manson. No method, no tone, anywhere ; ghastly barbaric brutality—namely, scarlet and gold ; a brutal barbarism, beside which the half-toned fantasticism of Ghengis, Baatu, and the gentle Kublia Khan, relieved only by jewels and gold, look high art. Brutal, senseless, godless !

In the centre of it lay the Rajah, reading the *English* translation of a French novel, not by any means a Balzac or a Jules Janin ; quite a different sort of one.

He was quite alone, and had violated every rule of art in his person as he had in his room. He was dressed in green velvet, scarlet silk, and gold. He was a very handsome man, lighter in complexion than the Nawab—lighter than many Englishmen—somewhat fat for his age, with a black, drooping moustache. And before him, as he pretended, suddenly, came Jim and the Nawab.

With pretended surprise, he turned over on his divan, turned down his page, and lay looking at them.

“The dog is ready,” said the Nawab.

“I’ll break his —— neck for fivepence, first,” said Jim, in a whisper.

“You are the Rajah of Bethoor ?” said Jim.

“I *thought* I was till this moment,” said the Rajah, in very tolerable English. “I have begun to doubt it this last few moments. My agreement with the Company is well known, and one part of it was that I was to be left in

possession of my domestic peace. I now find that I am to be insulted by the invasions of drunken English subalterns and their miserable native imitators."

"*Il n'est pas prêt*," said the Nawab. "*Allez vous en, jeune Evans*," which was what he made of the oft-repeated Shrewsbury slang. "Go it, young Evans."

"I do not understand Italian," said the Rajah, "and I know not Evans. It is Mor-daunt who is here. What do you want?"

"I want to know about my moonshee," said Jim.

"I am not an impressor of moonshees; ask your Colonel," said the Rajah. "If you want a moonshee, ask him to find you one."

"I believe that you have murdered mine," said Jim.

"What can I possibly care what a subaltern like you believes or disbelieves?" said the Rajah. "If I had had him assassinated, do you think I would confess it yet? You can go—for the present."

"I'll have the truth out of you if you were fifty Rajahs," said Jim.

“Possibly,” said the Rajah. “You can go for this once, however.”

And as he said this he rose and advanced towards them, his book in his left hand, and his right forefinger pointed, not at Jim, but at the Nawab.

“For you,” he said, in Hindustani, “you shall not die. You shall pray for death, but I shall keep you alive. You shall roll before my feet, praying me to kill you; but you shall not die. You English-lover, have you read ‘The Curse of Kehama,’ the only thing worth reading the English ever produced? You shall not die! No, you shall not die!”

“You shall, though!” shouted the Nawab; and before our poor Jim could collect his thoughts, the Nawab had dashed out behind him, with a long gleaming knife in his hand, and was preparing for a tiger spring upon the Rajah.

Jim had just time to cast himself between them. He got the knife through his deltoid muscle; it was as likely to have gone through his heart. He forced the Nawab back, crying, “Consider, old boy, consider. Before a British

officer ! Old man, you have stabbed me accidentally ; but I will throw you on your back if you are not quiet."

The Nawab was quiet at once.

"Why did you not let me get to him ? It would have been better. Come away." And turning to the Rajah, who stood perfectly still, he said, "If you have any gratitude in your dog's heart, you will remember that Mordaunt saved your life to-day."

"I will remember Mordaunt and remember you," said the Rajah. "You are free to go." And they went—not having gained much.

Jim was badly wounded, and the Nawab was in the deepest distress, at which Jim chaffed him, telling him that he was not half an Englishman yet. It was no worse than a bloody nose. Still the blood was soaking in an ugly manner through Jim's white sleeves, and the Nawab wanted him to stay on the outer quadrangle and have it dressed. But Jim said, "No ; let us get out of this hole. I can't stand this." And so they went out through the great teak door once again.

So came one of the strangest surprises ever

seen, yet one of the most easily accounted for. Surprises *do* occur in the world, but they always arise from the most natural causes.

When they got out into the sunshine beyond the gate, there stood before them a British officer in blue coat and white trousers, with a sword hooked up to his side, and his shako on the side of his head. A smallish officer, just up to regulation. A marvellous neat, tight little officer, up to any amount of work. And when Jim looked on the officer, he cried, "Heavens and earth ! it is Eddy !"

And it was Eddy. And Eddy said, "I have exchanged into the 201st Foot, in order to be with you and Roland."

CHAPTER IV.

THE Dean of St. Paul's had long wearied of his Oxford work. Eternal grinding at bad Greek, bad Latin, and bad logic, had become deeply wearisome to him. Most of the men of his time, too, had gone away, and the men he sat with in common were bright, clever, hearty enough ; but they were too young for him. He was getting a Foggy among Dons.

Why, he had often put it to himself, should he stay there trying to live down the old Provost, who was not so very old, and become head of the house himself? It was a miserable life. Certainly, Norway, in the long vacation, freshened him up a little ; but then he was the only man in the college who ever went to Norway. He could see that his salmon stories bored men at dessert, and, like a wise man, he left off telling them. And, indeed,

for him, there was little left to talk about, save the everlasting pettinesses of hebdomadal board, or something which he hated still more.

When he had been young, there had been a great and brilliant school at the university. A school of men, who, in various ways, have left their mark upon the generation, and whose names are familiar in all men's mouths even now. *He* had been one of them. But they were all gone. Some to Rome, some to bishoprics, some to deaneries, one particularly to a school, leaving his seal for a whole generation or more on the boys of England, partly through his own genius, and partly through the surprising genius of three or four of his pupils. They had split off in opinion, this mighty old band of giants, and there were only two left "up" now. Himself and one other. The Dean and this last of the giants of the old time had extremely diverged in opinion: though in gentle social intercourse, whenever they met, there was no change.

In a pretty garden by the river walked the Dean all at ease, looking at the silly deer under the overarching elms; and towards him,

along the walk, came this old giant, with his head bowed low, walking fast and steadily.

Their eyes met as the Professor raised his head. "Ah, dean!" he said, "we never see one another now; and we are the only two left. Let us walk and talk together." And they hooked arms, and walked and talked.

Over all the old ones who had fought and striven in the old times. Gently, like elderly, wise men, not like hot-headed boys, they talked over their differences; and as they walked and talked the dear old times seemed to come back again in wave after wave of reminiscence, until the tide of good-will was high. Boys in your full high blood, fight, squabble, and quarrel for your principles. If a man won't use strong language in defence of his principles he is not much of a man. But let two old men, with the Indian summer of recollection around them, talk over their old quarrels with kindly good-will.

That is what the Professor and the Dean did. And the Professor said, "I daresay I am '*Laudator temporis acti*,' my dear Dean. But we have not the same stamp of young

men up now. I partly attribute it, of course, to the atrocious opinions of you and of your party, and in a still more extreme degree to boat-racing."

"My opinions are not so *very* atrocious," said the Dean. "And as for boat-racing, I always hated it. But, it is as you say. I find it at our place. We have a lot of men who call themselves of *your* party at our place now; and we have a lot of men who call themselves of mine. But there is scarcely one of them who understands the questions between us. On both sides shallow verbiage on details. The fight now is not the old grand fight when you and I fought; there are not the men to fight it."

And the Dean mentioned a string of names which I dare not write down, one of the greatest in our time. Not of one party, but of two great ones, but which were all so familiar to the Dean and the Professor that they called them often by their Christian names. Men who took two sides, yet could love and respect one another. Men, both sides of them "severe," yet with a liberality which shames

that of this day. Is there any one who has not been astonished lately at Keble's opinions on the tests? The two parties in those days were *sure*, and, therefore, bold and magnanimous.

"I wish you would come and dine with me to-night," said the Dean, "I should like to show you our new tutors of both parties."

"Thanks, rather not," said the Professor, "I dislike looking on decadence. We have not had a fine team of boys up for a long time."

"I beg your pardon," said the Dean, with animation. "K—— sent me up the year before last as fine a team of boys as I would wish to see."

The Professor looked him full in the face and laughed at him. The Dean could not think why.

"A splendid team of lads. Wild as hawks, fantastic as monkeys, I will allow. But splendid lads. I wish you had known them."

"Roland, Eddy, Jack, Jim, and, to make up a fifth, Maynard. From Shropshire. Quite so." Said the Professor, laughing again.

“ Well, that is true,” said the Dean, puzzled. “ Could they have come your way ? I warned them against you and your evil ways very solemnly on many occasions.”

Undergraduates lounging about the High Street were utterly and entirely dumbfounded at the spectacle of the Dean and the Professor, known as deadly enemies, thirsting for one another’s blood, standing face to face with one another laughing heartily. Still more when they saw the Professor slap the Dean on the shoulder and say, “ I am a conjuror : I am a conjuror.”

“ Upon my word I think you are, old friend,” said the Dean, merrily.

“ What have you done with these boys ? ” asked the Professor, as they resumed their walk.

“ Well,” replied the Dean, with a long face, “ three are gone to India. One is married, and the other is doing nothing at all.”

“ A nice mess you have made of it,” said the Professor. “ I should recommend you to try parish work after this.”

“ I wish I could get some. I wish I was

away from here. I am getting too old to have influence with the young men, for I have not made a name like you."

"But, your turn must have come in for a home."

"I let it pass. It was only £260 a year, and house and glebe."

"It was not enough."

"It was not then ; but I would take it now. I am sick of this. I have done no good with my life. I think you have done much evil with yours. On certain points, dear old friend, there must be no compromise between us. I would oppose you in *public* to-morrow, you know."

The only answer was a kindly squeeze of the arm, and a golden silence on both sides. That is the way, as far as I have seen, that good men, deeply in earnest, and in earnest to the death, but on opposite sides, are getting to treat one another.

At a certain garden-door at the end of a College, they parted, and as the Professor opened his garden-door he chuckled, and said, "He will never know of it. He will never dream."

For a somewhat strange thing had happened to the Professor that morning. He had been sitting at his work when his servant brought him a card. Whereon was written "Mr. George Mordaunt." Whereupon he had risen, and gone quickly to greet a stout, square-headed man with grizzled hair, about fifty years old, who to do full honour to his old university, had dressed himself in the dress of twenty-five years previously, the time when he had been an undergraduate. A blue coat and gilt buttons, buff waistcoat, and drab trousers. And the Professor beholding him grasped his hand and said, "My dear Mordaunt! After so many years!"

"The old place is not any stranger than your face, Professor," said our stout good Squire, "though it makes me feel a little old. It is a place that hangs about one's heart—does it not?"

"I don't think I could stand to leave it now, Mordaunt. What have you been doing that you look so young?"

"Shooting, hunting, fishing, farming, managing my estate and the poor souls on it, by

God's help : educating my boys ; and as far as all other things cultivating an absolute vacuity of thought, as you will find when I come to my business. That is what makes me look so young."

"I have not worn so well as you," said the Professor, smiling.

"You look old enough to be my father," said Squire Mordaunt. "And as my father (though we are of the same age) I have come to consult you : and what is more to *take* your advice."

"Prettily put," said the Professor ; "I will try you, old friend."

"But have you time at my disposal ?" said Squire Mordaunt.

"It is now ten," said the Professor, "and from this until four in the afternoon I am at your service, for I have no lectures."

"Till four ! Bless the man, I shan't be half an hour. Come, hear my confession."

The Professor, folding his arms upon his breast, leant forward with a smile, and George Mordaunt began.

He was longer than half an hour. He told the Professor nearly all I have told you, about his boys and their various relations. About Roland and Ethel, and how he hoped some time or another that such a matter might come to pass. About Jim and his fantastic foolishness; about the good influence that the Evanses had on him, and about the unhappy attachment of the unhappy youth to his friend's wife. Nay, he even went so far as to put him in possession of the comical duello between Sir Jasper Meredith and Mrs. Maynard, of the Barton: the farce of the tale; but when alluding to the differences which had arisen between young Maynard and his wife, by Mrs. Maynard's scheming for Sir Jasper, told him that *that* should be set right by Eleanor Evans in time. "In time, my dear Professor, for it is a most delicate and painful subject, which will bear no handling save by the hand of a woman of genius. And Miss Evans is a woman of genius, if ever one lived." And so he brought her on the carpet, and told the Professor all about her from beginning to end. And the Professor only nodded his head from time to

time, and showed by his eyes that he understood the whole matter from beginning to end.

“She had an attachment once for my brother, now General Mordaunt in India, but it was not a happy one at all. He admired her, for she was very beautiful, but he was a dandy, and her brusqueries palled on him after a time. The necessary words were never said, and I think happily so, for they would never have done together at all.

“But another man was attached to her also. And she liked and respected him deeply. I think that she hankers for a renewal of her acquaintance with him. They are both too old to marry, that would be absurd, but I think it would please Eleanor to have him near her, not perhaps so much on his own account as on a sentimental ground, which will not seem to you, I am sure, ridiculous.”

The Professor withheld his opinion.

“She is of a very affectionate disposition. She is utterly devoted to two people : firstly, and in a minor degree to my daughter Ethel, and secondly, to the younger Evans, Edward, the nephew. She has slaved for that boy (she

is a farmer, as I told you), she has toiled over fallow and down for him winter and summer. She has laid awake planning for him, and since he has gone to India, she has lain awake weeping for him. I swear to you," said the Squire, with a terrible thump on the table, "that her love for that pretty lad is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen in my life."

The Professor said, nodding, "Ay, ay."

"Now again, leaving alone the personal affection I have for her, she has been the *making* of my daughter Ethel. (The finest girl in all England, sir.) And I want to oblige her. And I am certain that she has a hankering for the society of her old sweetheart."

The Professor sat up as if he did not exactly follow him. And he followed him still worse, when Mordaunt continued—

"Now old Hesketh has dropped at last, and so Doddington is in my gift, and I think that if the thing were done delicately. Say, by *your* recommendation—don't you see?"

The Professor began to see once more.

"That it would do—you follow me? I come to consult *you*. I have no son or relation in

the Church. What is more natural than that I, living out of the world, should come to you, an old friend I am sure, not actually to ask for a nomination, no, no; but to ask you: is such a man fit for the post?"

"My recommendation would be the very worst thing he could possibly have. It would raise a wasps' nest about your ears."

Mordaunt sat silent for a minute. His old friend's name certainly *did* suggest polemics.

"Well, I wanted to ask you about another part of the business. I am, I hope, a sound Churchman. This man has been called unsound. I don't go with you, but I respect your judgment. What *is* your opinion of the man?"

"I must know who he is, you know."

"The Dean of St. Paul's. If you decide against him, I will go no further."

The Professor gave a start. "He and I have had some battles-royal."

"That is one of the reasons why I came to you as a Christian English gentleman to decide for me."

"Then come in half an hour," and Mordaunt nodding went away.

When the half hour was gone he came back, and got his answer.

“By all means do what you proposed. He is doing himself no good here in any way.

“He is excellent, virtuous, diligent, admirable. He wants family life. He wants human ties. As an adversary, I shall be glad to get rid of him,” he went on, laughing. “As a man and a Christian I shall always respect him. You are lucky to catch such a man ; but are we sure he will come ?”

“The living is nearly £800 a year,” said Mordaunt.

“Foolish man,” said the Professor laughing, “you might in these precious times have got £12,000 for it. Good-bye, and God go with you.”

CHAPTER V.

I HOPE my readers will entirely dismiss from their minds the idea that Ethel was in the least degree "fast." She was only a country young lady who was a consummate horsewoman, and fond of riding long distances very fast, alone.

About this time it "behaved," as the Scotch say, her father to fall in love with, and buy, a hunter which was not in any way up to his weight, and what was more, ride it, against the advice of his wife, son, and daughter. The horse did the best it could for him, but the illimitable grief to which the Squire and this horse came to "among them" as the stud-groom put it, was perfectly illimitable. When, however, it came to the Squire's trying the largest water-jump in the country, with the hounds running, and the horse landing on the

near side, and the Squire swimming to the opposite one, he, heretofore obstinate, gave it up as a bad job, and said the horse was a worthless beast.

Ethel and John did not think so however. It was a beautiful large slightish thing, perfectly up to ten stone, though he had triumphantly proved he was not up to thirteen. Young Mordaunt tried it one day with a horse-rug round his knees on a side-saddle, and it went like a lamb. He and Ethel, secretly, one dewy morning at sunrise, had a secret meeting in the stable-yard, and he put Ethel on this horse, and the good brother and sister rode away, talking as brother and sister should, through the lanes, which grew narrower, wilder, and more grassy as they went on, until at the end of one turf lane, there was a five-barred gate *not* open. And young Mordaunt put his horse at it and topped it, and Ethel, *she* put her horse at it and topped it like a bird, and they were out on the wild breezy slopes of Longmynd together, talking of Roland and Eddy, and Jim, with the lazy valley awaking to its toil in the clearing mist six hundred feet below them.

That horse would do for Ethel. At breakfast they did so din their wonderful ride, and the wonderful performances of that horse, into their father's ears, that he, to save his intellect as he said, then and there gave it to Ethel, on the sole condition of its never being named to him again.

This was the first good jumping horse that Ethel had ever had. And if he did not improve in that art, it was not from want of practice. Its name was "Cheery Bird."

"What is the matter with your face, Ethel?" asked the Squire one morning.

"I have scratched it," said Ethel.

"So I see," said her father. "Unless some one else scratched it for you."

"The fact of the matter is that I have been out riding before breakfast," said Ethel.

"So I should have gathered from the fact that you have come to breakfast in your riding-habit, that your complexion is like a dairy-maid's, and that you have apparently combed your hair with a carving-fork."

"Well, I will tell the truth," said Ethel. "I went over to see Mary Maynard on Cheery

Bird at daybreak ; and I know you like me to be at home by breakfast, and I took a short-cut. And I got pounded, and put Cheery Bird at a hedge which was thicker than I thought, and got my face scratched."

"Why did you go to the Barton?" asked the Squire, as "black as thunder."

"To tell them the news from India," said Ethel, ready to drop into the earth, but incapable of lying.

"Leave *India* alone when you go *there*, Ethel. I expressly desire you to do so. If any of them want to know about India, they can ask your mother."

The Squire said no more, but he little dreamt how far poor innocent Ethel had carried her indiscretion. That unhappy and infatuated Jim had written *again* to Mildred Maynard, leaving the letter open, and begging his sister to read it. It was all about the Nawab and the moonshee, and Ethel had taken it. Poor lad ! he did not like to drop out of *all* communication with her.

But I wonder what Ethel would have said, had she known that Mildred Maynard was

lying, a heap of clothes with a moan inside it, while her mother-in-law stood over her with the letter—the letter which Ethel had brought, safe in her pocket.

Mrs. Maynard was not an early riser by any means. But she was aroused very early by hearing a horse's hoofs on the gravel, and looking out she saw Ethel dismounting, with a letter in her hand.

She put on her dressing-gown, and going swiftly to her daughter Mary's room, shook her by the shoulder, and said——

“Be ill, lie in bed.” And the girl having realized her orders, turned over and went to sleep again.

Ethel was not long with Mildred, and never dreamt any more than poor Mildred did that “the Cobra” (which was the last flower of speech Miss Evans had invented in favour of Mrs. Maynard) was doing anything else but snoring. “That is the way she ultimately finished and put an end to her husband,” Aunt Eleanor said. “She snored him into a better world. *I've* heard her.”

But Mrs. Maynard was by no means snoring,

but was watching in her dressing-gown for Ethel to go. The instant Ethel was gone, she had come swiftly into Mildred's dressing-room, snatched the letter from her hand and stood staring at her.

Hence the heap of clothes with the moan inside it, which lay on the floor.

Cheery Bird got quite as much work as he wanted. Take this one day in that devoted and honest horse's existence for instance. After breakfast he must be saddled again, and away she must go after Miss Evans. Miss Evans was not at home. Aunt Eleanor would have scorned the action at eleven o'clock in the day. She was on the farm, and at the farther end of it, of course. And her farm being of 700 acres or more, with the Grange at one end of it, she was a mile away.

Still Ethel was in no particular hurry, in fact she rather dreaded meeting Miss Evans, and that very keen lady's eye. Yet when she heard that Miss Evans was with the late lambs, in the forty-acre turnip-field, she must needs ride across country, taking fence after fence, though there were plenty of lanes and byways, leaving

alone the immortal right of way, which was a Roman road, and as she positively declared, part of Watling Street, which however goes through Lebotwood three miles off. Perhaps it was good health, and good humour. Perhaps it was that Aunt Eleanor's fences, like those of all good farmers, were so very easy, but I regret to say that Ethel, wherever she could find a bit of grass, "larked" from one grass-field to another, until she saw Aunt Eleanor, in a grey habit, on her obstinate cob, standing in the middle of a partly folded turnip-field, scolding her shepherd.

Ethel was just jumping the last fence into the turnip-field when Aunt Eleanor saw her. "Hi!" she cried out, "don't ride through my turnips. You must be out of your mind. Come down under the hedge and over the folded part," which Ethel did, and met Miss Evans.

"I don't want my farm to be made a steeple-chase course of," she said in greeting Ethel. "If you can't ride round by the lanes, you had better stay away. What do you mean by larking over my farm like that?"

“Your fences are so easy, Miss Evans.”

“Ah, I have slashed them down to get rid of the small birds, which are a plague and a curse. They are fifty times worse than the game. The game preservation and the law of trespass preserve more small birds than I want. Look at the sparrows in my rick-yard. Kill caterpillars, fiddle-de-dee; not as long as they can get grain, and very few afterwards. I am Lady Patroness of the Pulverbatch Sparrow Club, and I mean to remain so. What do you want? Why do you come larking over my fences like this?”

“Are you very cross, Miss Evans?”

“Yes, my dear; I don’t think I ever was in such an abominable temper in all my life.”

“Can I do anything to remove your ill-temper, Miss Evans?”

“Yes; stay with an old lonely woman and bear it.”

“You are not very old, Miss Evans, and I will stay with you for ever, in good temper and in bad temper, if you will let me.”

Aunt Eleanor gave Ethel a look, which she

understood. A look which meant worlds. Those two understood one another.

“Come,” said Ethel, sedately, for she knew her humours, “I will never lark over your fences again if you will tell me what is the matter, and give me some broiled chicken for lunch.”

Aunt Eleanor turned to the shepherd, and said—

“Now, mind, I don’t draw back from one word which I have said. Your orders were to shift hurdles *every* day. I don’t want this piece of clay pounded as hard as iron, and my wethers half starved because your daughter is fool enough to marry young Dickson. *You* ought to have shifted the hurdles, or the bridegroom should have come and done it, or the bride should have come and done it in her wedding-dress, so that it was done. Still, at the same time, we did so well with our spring lambs that I can afford to give you two shillings a week extra, making eighteen shillings. And your wife can have the whole of the washing now, which will be from nine shillings to twelve shillings a week, provided she don’t

send the things home in that state of pig and crock which the poor woman who is dead now did."

So, scattering blessings with the sound of curses, the reverse of Boileau's bishop, she fared on her quaint way with the beautiful Ethel. And as they rode quietly together Ethel said—

"Please, Miss Evans, why are you so cross?"

"Because people are such fools."

"Who?"

"Every body I know."

"Am I?" asked Ethel.

"My dear," said Aunt Eleanor, "I gave you my most emphatic opinion on *that* point a long time ago."

"So you did. Have you not changed it?"

"Not a bit."

"Well, never mind me. Who else have been making fools of themselves?"

"Eddy, to begin with."

"Of course," said Ethel.

"I don't see why you should say of course," said Aunt Eleanor. "Eddy is exceptionally

clever. I should, for example, rank Eddy's intellect far higher than yours."

"Heaven help me then!" said Ethel. "But what has he done last?"

"Exchanged into the 201st, so as to be with Roland and your brother Jim."

"The best thing the boy ever did. Why, the very grooms say that one boy requires two men to look after him."

"Your brother Jim wants some looking after," said Miss Evans.

"No, he does not," said Ethel, emphatically. "No one knows Jim but I. He comes of wild, fierce, fighting blood. And he will fight when the time comes. God save the man who stops his way! Look here, Miss Evans, you leave Jim alone, and I'll leave Eddy alone."

"Who is losing her temper *now*?" said Miss Evans.

"I suppose I am," said Ethel, bursting into a furious passion of tears, and bending her head down over her horse's neck. "Miss Evans, the wise men say that there is to be wrath and war there soon; wrath and war such as the world has never seen before. And Jim,

what can save him? Oh, my brother! Oh, my brother!"

It was well that this happened, for they were soon quiet again, and more friendly than ever. Aunt Eleanor, of course, retained a little causticity just to seem the more natural.

"Who has been making a fool of himself next?" asked Ethel.

"Your father," she replied with a whimsical smile. "He has gone and given the living of Doddington to the Dean of St. Paul's."

"I know, dear Miss Evans. Are you not glad of it?"

"Oh! yes, I am glad of it. I am very fond of the man; and if I was a hundred years younger, and he asked me, I would marry him. But I am not such a fool as to marry when I am nearly fifty."

"Is he handsome?" Miss Evans.

"No, child; he is very ugly, and wears a wig."

"It would be rather nice if you *were* to marry him," urged Ethel.

"Well, nice or nasty, I am not going to do it, as your father well knows. Therefore, I

say, your father has made a fool of himself in bringing the man here."

"Who next?" said Ethel.

"Your brother Jim. He has gone and married a moonshee, as far as I can understand from Eddy's letter. It is possible that it may be the best arrangement under the circumstances, but I hate the kind of thing. Your father's uncle married a quadroon, or a creole, or something or another, and they went down in a gale of wind in the Gulf of Mexico, with all hands, in the hurricane of 1788."

"But, my dear Miss Evans ——"

"Oh, you may well say your dear Miss Evans. Of course, you will speak up for your brother. *I* spoke up for *my* brother at one time, and a pretty mess I have made of it. I only know that if Eddy comes home with a puce-coloured wife she shall attend church, or I'll know the reason why."

"But, Miss Evans——"

"And then your brother must go horsing the mail-coach, and upsetting it into the graveyard. *I know* he has been horsing the long stages. I am *assured* of that; he would not

be your brother if he did not. Very likely with Eddy's money. Think of an officer and a gentleman marrying a moonshee, horsing long stages, driving his own cattle, and upsetting Her Majesty's mail in the churchyard! There is one comfort, the Nabob, or as Eddy foolishly spells it, the Nawab, was on the box-seat, and broke his neck."

It took a long time for Ethel to explain the real state of the case, which the reader is in possession of. All she got, after all, was a loud and incredulous sniff. It was explained to her by Ethel, the Dean, old Mordaunt, and young Mordaunt, that the moonshee was an aged gentleman and scholar of the Brahmin religion. But she nailed her colours to the mast, and kept them there still. She is more than ever persuaded, she says, that mixed marriages and friendships between different races are a mistake. And if pressed she points to the Nawab of Belpore, and requests to know what came of Jim's friendship for *him*.

"Then, there is this *Allan* (she never would say 'Evans') coming down here and establishing a conventicle, under the rector's own nose,

with the money he has robbed from Roland. He says he must worship according to his own conscience. He has got a fine conscience to take £1,000 a year, rent-charge, from Roland. What is good enough for me ought to be good enough for him, one would fancy. Well, I have told him *my* mind pretty often, which is a comfort."

It may have been to her. It was little enough to him, poor young fellow.

"Well, he will die. And what is more, die of heart-disease and over-work amongst Christ's poor; and what is more, go to heaven," resumed Aunt Eleanor. "I wish I didn't dislike him so very, very much. I never could keep my wicked old tongue away from that young man. I have been a most wicked old woman to him."

"He loved Eddy," said Ethel, quietly.

There was a very long pause.

"It was good of you to say that, child. You are a good child. But, when I committed the great and irretrievable wickedness of my life, I had not thought of that. I had ruined him before I thought of *that*. Had I thought

of it I would have stayed my hand. It is too late now. Good actions, child, live for ever, and bring forth fruit a thousandfold. Evil, thoughtless, spiteful actions, like mine towards him, bring down a heavy retribution even in this world. The Papists say, that they can release you from the consequences of your own actions, by certain formulas. I am sure I wish they could; but, then, on the other hand, they can't, don't you see. If I was gaby enough to believe in it, and the Pope of Rome were to send me on a pilgrimage to Mecca—I should say, Compostella, I'd go, to undo the wickedness and wrong I have done to that young man in a moment of folly and spite."

Ethel did not understand her; but she knew her well enough to know that, under her quaint fantastic language, there was a meaning, and a deep one.

"Here has been Sir Jasper Meredith again; a pretty fool he has made of himself. That little heap of bones, to save Roland from ruining his life by marrying Mary Maynard, wrote a letter, proposing to her. And that old *trot*, her mother, is determined to bring him to book,

and to make that sleepy ox, young Maynard, bring him to book likewise. *She* knows that her son would not stand her in his house long, fool as he is ; and so she wants to move to Sir Jasper Meredith's. *She* knows that he would not move in such a matter, unless she had a hold over him, stronger than ever she had before. And what has she done ? Made up a case of jealousy between our innocent little Mildred (another fool) and her honest oxlike son. She has done that. I beg your pardon, child, for talking of such things ; but the world wags as its wags ; and I don't hold with keeping a girl till she is five-and-twenty, in a Puritanical fictitious ignorance of evil. Fiddle-de-dee."

"But, Miss Evans, Robert Maynard has no one to be jealous about, I should think."

"Of course he has not. But, your brother Jim (as I previously remarked) is a fool, and has written her letters. Who has taken them to her I don't know. But, old Myrtle knows she has got them, and that her husband has been shown some. And there's a pretty kettle of fish."

She did not notice that poor Ethel gave a

low groan, and bent down on her saddle ; but she went on.

“ That is what reconciles me to this unhappy marriage of Jim’s with the Moonshee. What place she is moonshee of, I don’t know ; she seems to take no territorial title. I dare say she will make him a good wife, and she no doubt brings him money. How on earth she is to go in to dinner, or what rank she will take in the county, I can’t conceive. Lady Caradoc must go in first, I suppose, unless I send the moonshee in as bride ; but that wouldn’t do for long, you know, and I don’t want to disoblige Lady Caradoc. I want her to buy my clover hay ; I could let her have it five shillings a ton cheaper than I could any one else, because I shouldn’t have to deliver it.”

“ Dear Miss Evans,” said Ethel, “ all this is perfect nonsense.”

“ My dear, I assure you that if you bring Lady Caradoc to me to-morrow, she shall have the hay at £3 15s.”

“ I do not mean about that. I mean about this moonshee. His moonshee is an old man who teaches him Hindustani.”

“My dear,” said Miss Evans, loftily, “I do not, for a moment, dispute that you are quite right in believing everything which is told you. But, at the same time, I must point out to you that I am much older than you; that *my* brother was more *years* in India than yours has been *months*, and that I frequently heard him mention these very moonshees, as being the most *thundering humbugs going*. That was his expression. He may have been right, or he may have been wrong. He was not, according to my standard, a wise man; but he was not entirely deprived of understanding. I think we had better change the conversation, because really I am certain about nothing, since you have told me that Jim’s young wife was an aged Brahmin gentleman of scholastic habits. Live and learn. I am only certain of one thing at this present moment, and that is, that spring lamb does not pay for rearing so far from London. The loss in the transit is too great. And the pretty little beasts do suffer so horribly if they are sent alive. Good-bye, child.”

When Ethel got home her father and brother

were standing in the porch. Her brother took her in his mighty arms and lifted her off her horse.

He knew her ways. And she said to him, "You must kiss me twice more; for Jim is in India." And he did so, laughing, and held his arm round her waist the while. For there was between those two, the strange unfathomable love of brother and sister. A love which rivals that between mother and son—a love which is mysterious and incalculable; and so we will not say anything more about it.

"Lead her horse away," said the Squire.

"Yes, sir," said young Mordaunt, laughing at his father.

"And *keep* away," said the Squire. Young Mordaunt departed with the horse. And the Squire began on Ethel.

"Come here, girl."

"I have come."

"I was very angry with you this morning."

"You were."

"John says that I had no reason to be. I am very sorry for it, and I ask your pardon."

"You will break my heart among you,"

sobbed poor Ethel. "You are all so good to me ; and what can I do in return ?"

"Why, you can come here," said the sturdy old Squire, opening his arms ; and she went there. And for my part, looking at the matter in a practical way, I think that it was the best place she could go to, seeing that Roland was drumming and trumpeting away at Belpore, making Indian night hideous, and rousing the jackals by this process, which the service calls, I believe, changing guard.

Calculating English and Indian time, the Rajah of Bethoor just then looked out of a window, and he said, in Hindustani, "There go the cavalry bugles ; Cordery has moved them into the north lines. Hang him ; but I will sort him."

And Squire Mordaunt said to Ethel, "Pretty bird, what has *she* told you ?"

"She has told me everything. And I will do so no more. I did not know, father ; indeed I did not know. I carried that letter from Jim this morning in sheer innocence. I knew

nothing, father. Our poor Jim! our poor Jim!"

The Rajah of Bethoor said, pretty nearly at the same time, "I hear your bugle, you scamp. Curse you, there you go with your precious Nawab beside you. Oh! my dear young friends. You James Mordaunt, you have insulted me once, and you are a very dangerous and determined hound. I'll have your life one way or another. You, Nawab, can live."

Said Squire Mordaunt to his daughter, "There is one thing we have never spoken about, child. Do you love Roland?"

And she said "Yes."

Said the Rajah of Bethoor, "There goes the worst and most dangerous man of the whole corps: that Roland Evans. That young wretch has the cunning of a jackal, the courage of a tiger, and the intellect of a Clive. You must die, my dear young man."

Said Squire Mordaunt to Ethel. "It is very

well. He is noble and good. I am glad he has escaped the Maynard entanglement. We shall have him home covered with glory soon. And to keep him in memory of us he has our good Jim, and good little Eddy."

Drums and fifes now. A sub-division of the 201st infantry stepping quickly on under the Indian moonlight, with their swift inexorable Roman-like march, to pick up stragglers, see all safe, and generally to do the work of a sergeant's guard; for things were getting so wild and dangerous now, that we must have a commissioned officer at this work; a gentleman responsible, by the risk of social ruin, for any thing going wrong; which, in a country like ours, is a terribly strong guarantee.

And, by the side of the sub-division, marches our little Eddy; going swift and direct, well from the hips, with his sword close up to his side in the swivels, in white trousers, white helmet, and blue tunic. A gallant little officer, as self-possessed as when he used to steer the old four-oar, but liking this work better, seeing, as he said, that it *led* to something.

By a most remarkable circumstance, when he was exactly under that particular window of the Rajah's enormous palace which looked upon the town, and out of which the Rajah himself was stealthily looking, he cried "Halt!" And they halted, and ordered arms according to Eddy's direction.

"You little devil!" said the Rajah to himself, "you know I am here."

"Sergeant," said Eddy in his airiest tone.

"Yes, sir."

"Akers was not come in when we marched?"

"No, sir."

"I am afraid he is lying drunk in the jungle somewhere. What a pity it is he does such things! I will just go round that bit of jungle before we go to quarters, what do you say?"

"The very best thing possible, sir. There are tigers about."

"Ball cartridge, load!" shouted Eddy, and that having been done, "Quick March!" and this little part of the arrangement called military organization (which has conquered India, Silesia, Poland, the Southern States, and which is, like brandy or fire, a good servant but a bad

master), went swiftly off up the road past the jungle.

The Rajah, who had drawn in his head at the word "Ball cartridge," put it out again, and looked after Eddy, swinging along in the moonlight, beside his men.

"You little devil!" said he, "I will broil you alive on hot coals for this insult, and your beloved James Mordaunt, sahib, shall sit and look on."

Aunt Eleanor said to a young man who had come down on agricultural business, and who was going over the farm with her, "Tell Mr. Sutton that I shall not preserve my own seed any more. Mine never comes true. I shall buy of you in future. I want to do the best by this farm, because my nephew, Mr. Edward Evans is coming home from India soon, and he will take the management of it."

And so the young man departed to Reading, just as the Rajah of Bethoor had settled down, to smoke himself into a state of contemplative ferocity against Eddy, who, as the last, was the most deeply hated of the men who had insulted him.

Do you say that this is fantastic? If you do, I entirely agree with you. Things *were* fantastic at that time. The most fantastic thing I know, is Hollar's Dance of Death. I doubt that few know that book. To me it is godless, religionless, hopeless. But it is a great book. Nearly the grimmest of all grim forms of Teutonic thought, which is saying something, comes nowhere near it. In that book, Death is Lord and Master, the beginning and the end.

In this book of Hollar's, Death comes to every one at the finish and end of all things—from the Emperor to the Nun. Hopeless, ghastly, abominable, to one who believes in a future state and the beneficence of God. But fantastic and quaint? undoubtedly so; in these times we might make some fun out of the devils which danced before St. Anthony.

I can make no fun out of it for you. My heart is too sick over it, as the hearts of the best Americans are over *their* war. I only assert that it was fantastic. That two styles of civilization came in contact, like the two poles of a battery. But fantastic it *was*. Why our good Nawab loaded his guns with Eddy's

empty jam-pots and the brass-headed nails which Aunt Eleanor had sent him to hang up his pictures ! *That* is fantastic I fancy.

Was it terrible ? Ask the widow with the broad white forehead and the grey hair. She has often told grief to leave that forehead of hers, and not wrinkle it between her eyebrows ! but grief sits there on its throne still. Ask *her*. She turns her face to the wall, and weeps afresh. Ask the gentle subdued old Colonel, from whose face, by one dim dark week of horror, every expression has been banished, save that of an illimitable capacity of undergoing suffering.

It is bright English sunshine, in a beautiful old English garden, and all the county is here, shooting bow-arrow, and playing croquet. That is young Lord Thingaby, who is wearing shoes one remarks, and one thinks of shoes oneself, for one likes to look nice. The Poet is here, in his best of humours, and the Beauty lights us all up like a torch, for folks stop conversation to look and admire. That very tall gentleman is Lord Whosee (I notice that his Lordship's stature is not mentioned

either in Debrett's, Burke's, or Walford's peerages, an omission which I hope will be immediately remedied). In these days of Athletics it is not much to ask; we really ought to have the height, weight, and pace per mile, of every member of the British Peerage, or we shall drift into anarchy. Turn to the name "Jersey" for instance. I have not, because I don't happen to see the books, but I will bet a halfpenny that you get no information on the subject.

There is the Beauty going into the kitchen garden, to show Lord Bobalink (who married Miss Whippoorwill, second cousin, as you will remember, doubtless, to Miss Bluebird, in America) the peaches. Lord Bobalink is a rising man, and a good statesman. Lord Bobalink generally knows which way the cat will jump, though *he* invariably jumps the other way. He might do wonders if he would be dishonest. So one goes into the kitchen garden, to see Lord Bobalink, under the peaches on the south wall. But between us and Lord Bobalink, I meet an old man. A man with a smitten face, as if destiny herself had smote

him, and it puts Lord Bobalink out of my head. "Colonel," I say, "I want to have a long talk with you about the Indian Mutiny."

"Any other subject," says the bowed-down old Colonel; "you are young and happy, I am old and broken. I will speak to you on any other subject but that. Did you not know my two girls before I sent for them?"

I had forgotten that unutterable horror for one instant. One does forget. But the bright English summer day was turned into dark night, as I walked along behind the Colonel's elbow. The southern sun was shining on the peaches, and threw our shadow on them. And as he gave me details, leaving out his own family, our shadow fell upon them and seemed as though it would blight them.

"Fantastic?" Yes. Horrible? Yes. But the Colonel was very quiet over it. "It was dacoitee on our part, you know. We had not any business there by the law of nations. Yet if it had not been for sheer dacoitee, where would have been the English, French, Prussian, Austrian, or American nation, now?"

I couldn't answer the Colonel, and what is

more, I cannot now. Dacoitee is undefinable. The removing of the Choctaws from Florida to Dacotah, would be considered a pretty strong example of dacoitee, by some folks, if it had not been done by a Nation of Angels, whose founder, George Washington, was a slave-owner, and whose Poet-Laureate takes every opportunity of snubbing us on such points, the removal of the Acadians for instance. *N'importe*. My say is only this, that the Indian Mutiny, bringing together, as it did, two very different civilizations, was a very fantastic business.

CHAPTER VI.

It so happened, in the course of accidents, that Squire Mordaunt should be riding along a Shropshire lane, abutting on his own property, and thinking; a not very improbable incident. It moreover happened that it was Thursday afternoon, which, again, on the face of it, is not absolutely impossible. Furthermore, he was thinking whether it would not be better for him to give up the home farm, which considering he was losing a cool £500 a year on it, is not one of those incidents in fiction which, all things considered, can be classed as sensational.

He was aroused from his reverie, the result of which was that he wondered how old Eleanor did it, by hearing a hymn sung by a few women; and finding himself in front of a red brick Dissenting chapel, he with a bull-dog

promptitude, which was part of his nature, drew up, and said, "Oh, *here* you are!"

There was a stony-looking, hammer-headed cob, of a colour so quaint that it would take fifty Burne Joneses to reproduce it, tied to the rails—a cob as utterly unlike the article known at Aldridge's as a bishop's cob as it was possible to conceive. Any bishop who had been seen riding on such a hammer-headed, straight-shouldered, low-fetlocked, low-crested beast, would have had a brotherly admonition from certainly the late Archbishop of York, who knew a cob when he saw one, and who knew how to do his Christian work among the Yorkshire wolds on one also.

Squire Mordaunt got off and tied his horse to the rails of the Dissenting chapel, as far from this fearful dun-grey coloured "pony" (as he called it) as possible. Then with his whip behind his back, he stood and looked at him for a few minutes, and at the end said,

"You are a ramshackle brute. But you have a kindly eye, and get through, I don't doubt, a deal of work. I am going in to hear your master."

The horse made no remark whatever.

Big, burly Squire Mordaunt, dressed in grey, with breeches and gaiters, a sturdy, inexorable figure, stepped into the door, and stood beside an old woman. There were only a few old men, nearly past work, and labourers' wives in there. His old trained eye told him why. A mere Popish priest in a hard-worked neighbourhood, will tell you why labouring *men* are so difficult to get to church.

The hymn was not half over, and the Squire nudging the old woman next him, took a half of her trembling hymn-book, and what is more, sang out lustily, like a good old Briton as he was. The old woman owed him thirteen weeks' rent, and he had told her that he would turn her out if she didn't come to church. Now he found her here, and she trembled in her shoes. And she and the Squire finished the hymn together.

Talking in places of public worship is most objectionable. But when the Squire and this old woman sat down after the hymn, they began to talk: let us hope it will be forgiven them.

The Squire said in a whisper, behind his hand, "I am glad to see you here. I thought you went nowhere."

She whispered, "I am two mile from church, and look at my shoes." And she pulled up her old petticoats to show them.

The Squire whispered, "All right. Never mind about the rent, *I* don't want it. And come up to Maedingaway, he shall give you your seed potatoes. You shall have York Regents, old girl. Don't cut them, plant 'em whole."

This scandalous and indecent conversation was brought to a stop by a dead silence on the part of the whole congregation. Squire Mordaunt scarcely improved his scandalous position by saying in a loud voice, to the officiating minister,

"I beg pardon, sir. Pray go on."

The officiating minister went on. It was Allan Gray, looking more like a bloodhound than ever, with the deep loving eyes, yet with the potential ferocity of the bloodhound also. He began his sermon. And from the first moment he began, Squire Mordaunt began to listen.

His text was, "I have other sheep not of this fold." And he began to handle *that*. Did it mean the Seven Churches? It appeared to mean more than that to him. And while he was on the subject of the Seven Churches, he took the opportunity to go in for a furious, wild attack on the Church of Thyatira, which he said had never existed until fifty years after Saint John's death.

Whereupon the Squire said to *himself*: "You are cutting your Scriptures to pieces, are you. Young man, did you ever hear of such a place as Rome? With your craving for dogmatism, and your distrust of revelation, you'll be a Papist in two years, if you don't mind."

He was not a Papist at present, however. He enlarged on his theme. Other sheep. Which? Dissenters of all kinds, doubtless. Men who, like Professor X. and Professor Y., were trying to find out God by their own lights. Doubtless these also. Inhabitants of other planets? There was little doubt, but that they were meant by the sheep of the other fold. The moon, as had been so well proved by the late Mr. Copeland, now dead thirty

years, but uncontradicted, was the Hell, Hell, the concealed place, the place of departed spirits, before their final judgment—

“Purgatory”—growled the Squire.

He could not agree with the late Mr. Cope-land, advocate, that the sun was the place of eternal torture for 729,000,000, out of 800,000,000, on the face of the globe. He was, however, perfectly certain that the 120,000,000 of Papists and Anglicans who imitated Rome, would be either in the sun or farther, very soon.

This was a hit out at Squire Mordaunt, who had given his living to a well-known Broad Churchman. Who had furthermore increased his sins by having (as churchwarden) encouraged decorations in the church. The Dean of Saint Paul's was well known as a learned man, of lax views, in one point declaring that *he* in *his* way believed in the Real Presence, with a strong tendency to ceremonialism. The women and the old men did not understand it at all. It was Greek to them.

“That man will be at Rome in a year. He

is unable to see the points of the question. I wonder what the effect on the estate would be if I sent him to Rome. I have a good mind to send for old Father Jones. That man is hungering after dogmas. Upon my word and honour I have a good mind to do it."

But at this time the sermon was concluded, and the old woman to whom Mordaunt had forgiven her rent, woke up and dropped her reticule, her pattens, and her umbrella. "After all," said Squire Mordaunt, "we are both of us only talking to old women." Which was, in one sense certainly, true.

The service was over, and the Squire went out, waiting for the man we will call Allan Gray. He joined the Squire in the road. And the Squire said, "South-east?"

Allan Gray said, "Why, my good sir?"

"Rome?" said the Squire.

"No," said Allan, so quietly and good-naturedly, that the Squire was disarmed at once. "I do not think it will come to that. I see that you understand me, but it will not come to that. I grope in the dark. You are wise there, Mr. Mordaunt, but it will never

come to that with me. I have a guider who never errs."

"His name?" said Squire Mordaunt.

"Love," said Allan. "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

This was rather Greek to the good Squire, shrewd as he was. He said, "Do you mean?"

"I mean Eddy Evans, my half-brother. In all history, I think there was never any one like him. I am bound to believe in original sin, but that boy never committed it. That is the question between myself and God. That boy Eddy has to suffer for original sin, in everlasting torment, but he never committed it."

"My good young man," said Squire Mordaunt, "do go to Rome. Their formulas are far less horrible than yours. I can't understand why the deuce you fellows *don't* go to Rome."

Allan treated the square Squire with lofty scorn. He did not take up the argument. He continued:

"These attorneys, these Somes, have ar-

ranged all the details of the compromise between myself and my father's estate. I mention this fact to you as my father's trustee. They will pay me money in two months' time. That will enable me to sail by the Burrumpooter. May I ask, as a special favour, that you will receive me whilst I am here?"

"Receive you? Certainly. You are a good young man. Sail by the Burrumpooter. What do you mean?"

"I am going to India in two months, sir. Eddy Evans wants guidance, and there is much to do there. Eddy Evans, whom I now know as my brother, I always wondered why I loved him so well, has been through many religious experiences with me. I am going after him."

"Well, don't turn him Papist, young man," said the Squire, "because that is the way you are going just now."

CHAPTER VII.

MISS EVANS had, indeed, done far more than she ever meant by her one act of thoughtless spite. Poor Allan Gray was terribly smitten with our good friend Ethel; and at the same time, being neither wanting in brains nor fine feeling, he was aware that it was in the highest degree improbable that he would ever make the least impression upon her.

They were so utterly different in ways of life and in ways of thought. She a lady of an old house, he not used to the rank of life in which she had always lived; she a Churchwoman of the highest, he a Dissenter of the lowest; she trained in all field exercises, he a thorough Cockney as ever was bred, considering foxhunting and horseracing sinful. He was perfectly determined never to palter with any one of his principles, but to remain exactly as he was

then. He knew, therefore, that he had no hope of Ethel.

Yet he met her very often indeed, and talked very much with her. He was so very respectful, and so very distant, that she never guessed the state of the poor youth's heart, and by degrees got to like him.

How came they to be thrown together? One of the first people who took up Allan with the greatest *empressement* was Mrs. Maynard. She begged him to come to see them, and he did so.

She was as sharp and as keen a woman as any in broad Shropshire. She had not seen Ethel and Allan together twice, before she knew his secret.

Such an opportunity of annoying Miss Evans, and, possibly, of getting Miss Ethel well talked about, was not to be lost for a moment. She acted perfectly; begging Ethel to come as often as she could, and sit with Mildred, who was now getting very ailing indeed. Ethel could not have helped it even had she wanted; but, indeed, she liked very much to have pretty little Mildred with her,

and see her brighten up while she prattled by the hour about Roland, a theme on which poor Ethel never tired. So it came that Allan and Ethel saw a great deal of one another, and that Miss Evans knew nothing about it, as she avoided Mrs. Maynard like poison, and left her to accumulate more atrocities for the day of reckoning, which Miss Evans dimly saw would come between her and "that woman" some time or another.

The household there seemed outwardly happy, but there was still a sad cloud between Mildred and her good-natured husband. He was devotedly kind to her—kinder than ever now that she was getting near to be a mother. Besides, before Ethel or Allan, it was quite impossible to hint at any domestic trouble. The household was a very pleasant one to Allan, and, you may depend upon it, Mrs. Maynard was civil enough. Allan thought her the nicest lady he had ever known, and showed it so very plainly, that Mrs. Maynard once, for a single instant, thought whether she had not been rather precipitate in shelving herself as an old widow, and whether it would still be worth

while to get converted by Allan, with a view to matrimony. He was six-and-twenty to thirty, and she was forty to five-and-forty, without a grey hair in her head. It was in her mind and out of it again, and although she never exactly acted on it, she became extremely Low Church, and started a Mary Stuart cap, which, as being the cap which has played more mischief with the minds of men in all history, than another cap, she argued, was the proper thing under the circumstances. She might as well have worn Elizabeth's best ruff, for all the effect she was likely to produce at present. At the same time, her John Knox might meet with a heart accident, and might want consoling some day, and that would be easier done in the Mary Stuart cap after all.

All hints and allusions of any tenderness between Roland and Ethel, she, of course, very carefully suppressed. Miss Evans she kept at a safe distance by continually sending her fulsomely loving and flattering messages. She well knew that good lady's humour. "I don't mind her so much when she shows fight," said

Aunt Eleanor; "but when she takes to soft-soaping, I cannot bear the sight of her," which Mrs. Maynard unhappily well knew.

I said Ethel got to like him. She did so very much, and found him a most intelligent and agreeable companion. His settled intention of going to India, so frequently expressed, combined with her perfect unconsciousness, and his almost haughtily careful reserve towards her, enabled her to be very good friends with him, without her even suspecting how he felt towards her. And when all was said and done, was he not Roland's elder brother?

She praised very highly his project of going to India, and sketched for him her brother Jim's character, in which he was represented as being as brave as Picton, and as good as Collingwood. Allan promised to cultivate that gentleman's acquaintance, but said nothing whatever about the extremely unfavourable opinion he had conceived of him on board the transport ship and elsewhere.

Mrs. Maynard's other great scheme did not seem to prosper at all. Sir Jasper Meredith,

having taken counsel with young *Somes*, proceeded immediately to the second Cataract of the River Nile, and would probably have pushed up as far as *Debonos*, or even *Kamrasis*, had not the management of his affairs imperatively called him back to England. Considerable additional wealth had fallen to him by the death of a very largely dowered aunt, and he had not been at *Lawley* a week before *Mrs. Maynard* was upon him.

He was utterly alone, and unprotected. Even the elder *Mordaunt* must be at *Shrewsbury* races. She came over in her son's carriage, and when the door was opened she merely walked in, and, with her pocket-handkerchief in her hand, requested to see *Sir Jasper Meredith*.

"How d'ye do, my dear *Jasper*?" she began. "We have been nearly out of our senses with worry and anxiety about you. Never to write one word! I tell you the truth, I gave you up for lost. I said, 'He is drowned.' Those were my very words, 'He is drowned.' Poor *Mary* instantly fainted away, and then I had seen what a very foolish thing I had done in

yielding to my convictions, and breaking them to her without preparation."

"I am sorry Miss Maynard was so very much upset," croaked Sir Jasper, in his most raven-like tone.

"Ah ! You don't know what that child's feelings are. She will give you a deal of trouble if you don't mind."

"Confound her, she is doing it already," thought Sir Jasper. "How the deuce am I to get out of this?" "We had a very pleasant tour, Mrs. Maynard. I am sorry I was not longer, but the river got low, and I came into Pleachmore and Spinsterwood, and I came home by Paris. I spent some money there."

"Ah, you young men ! You young men ! You will be gay. Yes ! yes !"

Sir Jasper caught her eye, and looked down on his withered, wasted, ruined body with an indignation akin to fury, but well concealed. She saw she had gone too far.

"I was not very gay," he said. "A miserable heap of ruined hopes like myself, much better dead, is not likely to be gay. I spent

some money in some jewels which I fancied, and I thought——” He rang the bell, and gave his servant a key and a direction, and the man, opening a bureau, took out a large morocco case, and went away.

“I rather thought that they would suit your complexion, my dear madam. Pray try them, and if they suit you, keep them.”

Oh, she *was* so delighted. It was so *kind*, so *thoughtful*, so *good*, to think of the poor old woman. She thought of gushingly kissing him, but he looked so exceedingly dangerous, and shortly afterwards took her leave, insisting that she could not give him one day more without coming to see Mary.

She opened her jewel-case in the carriage once more. “If you are going to pay this price every time you wish to avoid a disagreeable conversation, my little friend, I shall not trouble you much for a very long time. I will work you, my friend.”

And the moment she was gone, young Somes, the lawyer, came into the room, and said—“Did she take the jewels, Sir Jasper?”

“Like a trout takes a May-fly.”

“That is well. We have a hold on her now. She will deny the bribe now. I am afraid they were real.”

“Four thousand francs worth.”

“Hang it,” said *Somes*; “I wish you had got *Palais Royal*. She’d never have known it. One hundred and sixty pounds on her. Never mind. We are all right. We have bribed her far enough if she gives us trouble to tell her son. Here is my father with the leases.” And in toddled old *Mr. Somes*, the attorney, with the leases.

“Leases: you may well say leases, you two,” said the gentle old man. “You have been ‘leasing,’ I doubt. My boy, *Sir Jasper*,” continued the old attorney, looking affectionately at his son, “would not have his health if he did not keep business out of his father’s office. I might have made £6,000 or £8,000 out of the *Evans’* succession business, but he stopped it. And now he is doing his best to put an end to the best breach of promise case I have seen for years.”

“I have a good mind to marry the girl,” said *Sir Jasper*. “I can’t live long, and, to

tell the truth, don't want to. She is a fool, and I don't like her; but if her being my nominal wife, with a large settlement, would get her out of the hands of that woman, I am not at all sure that it would not be right to do so. She would expand and develop into something better and nobler if she was rich and free; and she is good-looking, and good-natured."

But the Somes would not hear of that for a moment, and hoisted up the poor little anatomy to sign his leases, Somes, the elder, suggesting to him that one way out of the business would be to marry the mother, which made Sir Jasper laugh till all his bones ached worse than usual.

"After all," he said, "seriously, between us all, is it not shameful and ghastly beyond measure, for that woman to propose to sell her daughter to such an awful object as myself?"

"Shameful!" said young Somes, sitting down suddenly beside him, putting his arm round his neck, and stroking his hair. "Yet, if women were all they pretended to be, I can

conceive of a certain kind of woman being as happy as the day is long as Jasper Meredith's wife."

"Ah!" said Sir Jasper Meredith, with a deep sigh and a catch in his breath; "I would make a good woman *so* happy."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE elder Somes was seized with an irritation of the mucous membrane which required him to blow his nose, but he was quite up to the occasion. "Ah!" he said, "you have lost a good chance, Sir Jasper. There is a lady riding up the avenue now who would have had you if you had thrown into her settlements the pasture on Lawley hill. Miss Evans. But you are out of the market there, sir; here is the late Dean of St. Paul's, our new Rector, your old master, riding with her. She seems to be blowing him up, which with her means a dangerous degree of affection. When *she* gets cool to you, you may always know that you are on her bad books."

"Lift me up and let me see them," said Sir Jasper, eagerly. "I wish she had come when Mrs. Maynard was here. What fun it would have been."

“We shall oblige her, before you are out of this scrape,” said young Somes. “Here she comes.”

In front of the terrace at Lawley there was an iron gate, and as no servant happened to be looking out of the window at that moment, none of the men went down to open it.

Our three friends who were looking out of window were considerably amused. The Dean (as we will still call him) came forward to open it as a matter of course, but Aunt Eleanor waved him back, saying that she made a point of opening gates for herself, which, in a way, she did. She was on the cob which during seven years had never allowed her to open one single gate from his back, but she recommenced the seven years' war without one moment's hesitation. The iron gate was Silesia and she was Marie Therèse : she went into the seventh year of the war without an instant's hesitation, and hooked at the latch with the hooked end of her riding whip. As soon as she had got tight hold of it, the cob (representing let us say the King of Prussia) backed across the grass to the left (into Saxony

shall we say ?) and it became evident that she must either be pulled off her horse, or let go her whip. She did the latter alternative, and as usual, dismounted, opened the gate and let her cob through.

But the gate went to right against the nose of the Dean's horse (who may be said with somewhat singular felicity to have represented the nation of France, so admirably represented in all its aspirations, as it turned out a few years after, by Louis XV.). However, the Dean's cob, being an ecclesiastical cob, used to the buffetings of this wicked world, took no exception to having three hundred-weight of iron sent slam against his nose, and allowed the Dean to open the gate. In a very short time Miss Evans and the Dean were shown into Sir Jasper Meredith's library.

"How d'ye do, Jasper?" she said. "My dear child, you don't look a bit better for your Nile trip. You look as if you had been half swallowed by a crocodile. I will tell you what I shall have to do with you, young man. I shall have to take you over to Pulverbach and nurse you up. I shall also have to look after

your property for you, if you go on trusting to the advice of these two Somes; they will rob you to that extent that you will die a miserable outlawed old exile at Boulogne. How are you two?"

They said smiling that they were quite well.

"That's a comfort," said Aunt Eleanor. "I am glad that some good people are flourishing, you never come near me. If I was the dirt under your feet you couldn't treat me worse than you do. Why you, Somes the elder, you are as old as I am."

"I am old enough to be your grandfather, Miss Evans," said the old man.

"That only makes it worse," said Aunt Eleanor. "You, old Somes, respected and loved in the valley so many years: the father of the valley, the healer of dissensions when you might make money by them; a man I have known all my life, never come near me now. Don't you know that when there is not welcome for you at Pulverbatch, I wish that Pulverbatch may come down and crush me. As for you, young sir, I don't understand you. You have let your whiskers grow long, and

turned barrister. However, you come of a good stock, and we will try to hope for the best."

The Dean remarked that he was at a loss to conceive what on earth Mr. Somes' whiskers had to do with the argument in hand; and that the talking of sheer nonsense "was like the letting out of waters."

Aunt Eleanor stopped directly, with a glance at him. His pertinent caustic impertinence (impertinence in the second intention *he* chose to call it) had pulled her up in her most fantastic moods more than once since they had been together. She instantly ranged into a subject which she conceived foreign to him.

"I came here on rather an unpleasant errand to-day, Jasper," she said. "Your bailiff offered me two hundred and fifty bushels of fluke kidney potatoes, and one half of them are York regents."

"I'll hang him on the day after to-morrow," said Sir Jasper.

"Thanks very much," said Aunt Eleanor. "I will ride over and see the execution. Send over the fresh two hundred and fifty bushels

to-night, and I will not prosecute you for swindling. As a matter of course I am letting you down easy, and shall pay you nothing. Now, Rector, if you will get my horse I will go."

The Dean and she rode away, and the three looked at them out of window.

"Why did she come here?" said old Somes.

"She had something to say, Sir Jasper, which she wouldn't say before us," said young Somes.

"I wonder what it was?" said old Somes.

"I don't," said young Somes. "It is about Maynard and his wife and young James Mor-daunt. That old woman Maynard ought to be put a stop to. She has been making mischief *there*, to keep a hold in the house. I never heard of such a persistent evil as that old woman exhibits. Evil speaking, lying, and slandering. There is no good about her at all."

They stood watching Aunt Eleanor down the avenue beside the late Dean of St. Paul's.

"Will those two make a match of it?" remarked old Somes.

"You are a better judge than I," said young Some. "They are very old, but I don't see why they should not."

"They quarrel a deal," said old Some.

"No, father, they don't. She is dead afraid of him. He lets her talk her nonsense to a certain point, and then he drops in and shuts her up. She has met her master."

"That," said Sir Jasper, moving himself, "is very singular. The Dean of St. Paul's is a man of the cloister, of the lecture room, of the common room. He can know nothing of women."

"He has been used to manage boys of from eighteen to twenty, however," replied young Some, "and they are pretty much like average women."

"But Miss Evans is not an average woman," said Sir Jasper. "She is wiser than most men. Wiser than the Dean in the ways of the world."

"Possibly," said young Some. "But then, don't you see, the Dean has learnt logic and she hasn't. So he can leave her to make a fool of herself and then pick her up sharp

and sudden, and that so to speak flabbergasts her. Besides he is a strong man on all points. He is master : and if she marries him, she will find it out. He will be master. Tongue is not strength. See what a fool that woman makes of herself about young Eddy Evans. And then again, see what a fool she makes of herself about Ethel Mordaunt. If Miss Mordaunt were to cry for anything to-morrow, she would sell a hundred acres to give it to her. That woman is not a strong woman, her heart is too good."

"Is Mrs. Maynard a 'strong' woman?" asked Sir Jasper, laughing. "I mean stronger than Miss Evans."

"The Maynard has the most brains. But she is a coward and a liar," replied young Somes.

CHAPTER IX.

So Allan spent the two months with Ethel. Mrs. Maynard growing more and more certain every day that he was going to make a fool of himself, and Allan getting more and more certain that he was not.

I doubt whether a man of good disposition and high character like Allan Gray, is very unhappy under a hopeless passion. Men with a craze in their brain will go as far as to hang themselves, but in those cases I doubt the man's being in love at all in the sense I speak of. Such admiration is more physical than mental, I suspect. I have heard of more than one Colonel Dobbin.

Allan had never been on such good terms with a highly educated, high-spirited lady before, and he found it, like the rest of the world, extremely charming. Thrown together more

and more, by Mrs. Maynard's plotting, and their growing liking for one another, they became very fast friends, and very confidential indeed, save on two points; Ethel seldom named Roland, and Allan never for an instant, by word or look let Ethel think that he admired her.

Miss Evans' dislike for this young man was so well known to Ethel, that she scarcely ever mentioned his name. And consequently their intimacy was quite unknown.

Ethel talked much with him about his plan of going to India. He was connected it seemed with some missionary society, whose speciality was India—I believe a German Society. He had offered to go out and see how they were doing, but he did not conceal from her that now it was definitely allowed, and he had settled in his mind that Eddy was his brother, he had felt an absolute craving to see more of him. He told her that he never could conceive what attracted him so much towards that young man.

“You had not the same feeling towards his brother, had you?” said Ethel.

He was thoughtful for a time. "Why, no, I cannot say that I had. I cannot tell in the least degree why. He is, I believe, everything which is noble, but he is so very—I don't know—handsome, elegant, accomplished, successful."

"Are those faults?"

"They jar upon me. It is a fault in my nature, I know, but they *do* jar upon me. It is painful for a man of somewhat high aspirations to feel his inferiority. Just think too how my brother Roland is employed. It is terrible to think of talents and gifts so wasted."

"Civilizing India; stopping suttee and other abominations; training himself to be a governor of men, a satrap of the greatest power on earth; defending the outposts of advancing railways and canals, making tanks and other low dirty work of the kind. Yes, miserable work indeed."

This was rather sharp, but there was a good deal of truth in it after all said and done. One of the finest things done in the Indian mutiny, was that fight which Mr. G. O. Trevelyan tells us of. *On a railway embankment.*

Ethel having got her advantage, pursued it for her own low ends. "Dear Mr. Evans," she said, "I want to ask one thing of you as a *very great* favour."

"Anything in reason, Miss Mordaunt."

"Don't on any account use your influence to induce Edward to leave the army. It would give fatal offence to every one."

"I never dreamt of doing such a thing for an instant," said Allan. "Many godly men have carried arms before now."

Ethel ran over a few, beginning with the Centurion, and ending with Cromwell, and then pursuing her advantage, got him to promise that he would be gentle and friendly with all three, and not obtrude his opinions on them too strongly. On behalf of her brother, she made a special appeal.

"If you knew what a noble creature he was," she said, "you would love him as I do: you will not suit one another, I fear. But, dear Mr. Evans, for *my* sake be kind and gentle to him; he is wild and fantastic, but try to bear with that; and above all, do not interfere in his friendship with Eddy; it is the thing which

keeps him from evil more than any other. I pray you, as the last prayer I shall make you, not to come between those two."

Allan said not one word, but he took her hand and kissed it; one of the deepest and best kept vows ever registered, was sworn by Allan Evans at that instant.

Not another word was said between them. Ethel tried to speak, but broke down, and he went away, for it was to be their last meeting. And he went at noon the next day.

As he passed through the hall, Mrs. Maynard slipped out, and said, "You look low; you have surely not been asking a question and had a refusal. Surely——"

"No," said Allan.

"Give my love to Roland," she said, "and tell him that his love is true and constant."

"Who is his true love?" said Allan.

"Did not you know he was engaged to be married to Ethel Mordaunt, and that she worships the ground he treads on? Good-bye. Dear me. Good-bye."

CHAPTER X.

ALLAN having long known that it was not himself, was not very terribly put out of the way when he found who it was; never having had a thought for himself, but having merely fallen in love haphazard, he could not in the least degree see why he, so utterly unsuited for her, should take her from Roland, who seemed to him exactly suited for her. But he was desperately in love with her nevertheless.

He was to go from Shrewsbury by the twelve o'clock train, and he had got a cart to take his luggage for him, and would himself walk. He was on the road, with Caradoc, Lawley, and Longmynd getting dim behind him, when he was aware of a young lady scouring swiftly on horseback across a grass field towards him. This young lady looked for a gap in the hedge (there *was* one, it being off Aunt Eleanor's

farm), but she did not see it, and leaning back, topped her horse across it on to the footpath, about forty yards before him. Then she dismounted and waited for him, and when he came up, she said, "I have caught you."

"I am so glad to see you once more, Miss Mordaunt," he said, "so very, very glad. You are the last made of all my friends, and really I think the dearest."

"I am so glad of that. I was in hopes you would like me. See here—see how I am going to trust you," and she looped up her habit under her arm and walked beside him, leading her horse.

"I want you to give this letter into my brother Jim's own hand. It is heavy, you see," she added, looking at him. "There is another letter inside. You will give it him safe, will you not?"

"Through fire and water. Through hell and beyond," was the singular, quiet reply.

"My dear sir, what are you saying?" said Ethel, startled.

"I beg pardon. I mope too much, I doubt,

and forget the value of words. Those words had meaning to me."

Ethel said good-bye ! and he said good-bye, and taking the letter, walked away down the bright white road, leaving Ethel standing on the path holding her horse, and looking after him.

He turned once and looked back, waving his hand. She stood there still like a statue, and waved her hand to him ; then a turn in the road hid him from her, and he was gone.

This happened to be a difficult day with Aunt Eleanor. She was making up her accounts, which always exasperated her, and the Dean had not come, as he said he would. The figures refused point-blank to add up, or multiply, or do anything else ; except exhibit new properties in numbers utterly unknown to those effete sciolists at Cambridge. She was very cross, and had inked her nose. She had foolishly sold her mangold, tempted by very high prices that year, but the season had been so bad that prices had risen, and she had to buy for her own beasts at a loss. Meanwhile, the original man who bought the mangold had

never paid her. And she wanted her money without selling out of the funds, for every sixpence she made, not sent to Eddy, was bought in at any price. She wanted that sixty-eight pounds because she had got it into her head—goodness knows how—that Eddy ought to give Jim's friend the Nawab a present of jewellery, (he could have fitted out Mr. Harry Emmanuel). "Those heathens love that kind of thing," was all the explanation she chose to give to the Dean.

She was looking out of window with an inky nose, when she saw Ethel come up to the door leading her horse by the bridle. She rang the bell three times for her groom, and ran to the door herself.

"What is the matter, child? has he been down with you? Are you hurt?"

"No," she said, "but I did not think of getting on him. I quite forgot him." And she followed Aunt Eleanor into the sitting-room, and casting herself down on the sofa, hid her face.

Aunt Eleanor went on with her accounts with a scared face. Two and two had per-

sistently made five before, but now they made $x + 5^{\text{th}}$. There was an unknown quantity in the room certainly. Ethel looked old and harried; she looked pale, wan, wild, and—come, out with the word—fierce. She looked like her brother Jim at his worst; and if ever sheer absolute terror was in the heart of an honest, brave, old woman, it was in the heart of Aunt Eleanor at that time.

“Ethel!”

“Leave me alone! Leave me alone!”

“But Ethel dear!”

“Why do I not die? Why did God gift me with this splendid beauty, of which I am so perfectly conscious, that I might only work misery? Let me alone.”

There was a very short pause, after which Aunt Eleanor rose, and, in a loud voice, said—

“Ethel, you must speak. If you and I lived alone together, we should madden one another with our reticence. We have both the same horrible habit. In Heaven’s name, girl, tell me what is the matter. I will confess my sin to you, and you shall make me kiss the floor for it.”

"I have no charge against you, Miss Evans," said Ethel. "You have always been my best and most dearly loved friend. My story is soon told. I have won the heart of a noble man, and I have broken his."

"Whose?"

"Allan Evans's."

"Has he spoken to you?" said Miss Evans, almost in a whisper.

"No; he is too leal, too loyal, too noble, too gallant for *that*," replied Ethel. "He was gentleman enough to see that I gave him no reason to speak to me; but when he left me this morning, I saw it all."

"How did you see it?"

"By an expression in his face, only for one instant. *You*, with your beauty, must have seen that more than once; and an expression in his mouth so unlike his usual religiousness that I rebuked him for it."

"Go on," said Aunt Eleanor."

Ethel sat up, pale and wild, on the sofa.

"I will tell you everything. Don't desert me. I know that Roland loves me; but he has not written to me anything more than

formalities. He thinks that his change from elder to younger son should make a difference. And I wrote him a letter, containing a great deal more than mere formalities. And I gave it to Allan Evans to take to him. And he knew what he was doing. Allan looked me in the face, and showed me that he knew for whom the letter was. But he will deliver it. If all the banded fiends which you make me read about in Milton, were to oppose him, he would carry that letter safe through. He promised in words strange to him."

"What were his words?"

"I cannot repeat them."

"Will you write them down?"

"I dare do as much as that for you; but you must leave me alone afterwards."

Aunt Eleanor took the sheet of note-paper which Ethel gave her, and read—

"Through fire and water; through hell and beyond it."

She was very serious and deeply grieved. She never thought it would have gone as far as this. She said to Ethel—

“Sit here, my dear, comfortable and quiet. I am going out on the farm.”

Now this was a statement which, had it been uttered by Mrs. Maynard, Aunt Eleanor would have called “another of them,” meaning another outrageous story; for she was not going on the farm at all, but just rode over to tell the whole story to the Dean of St. Paul’s, the Rector.

He merely nodded his head until he came to the fact that she had introduced Allan and Ethel to one another, with a distinct view of plaguing Allan. Then he rose and gave it to her.

“You must have been out of your mind. That is one of the wickedest things I ever heard of in my life. You ought to be entirely and utterly ashamed of yourself. If a man were to do such a thing, he would be chased from society.”

“I have confessed my sin.”

“What is the use of confessing your particular sin, after doing your best to ruin two lives, and having succeeded in ruining one? Why did you do so?”

"It pleased me," said Aunt Eleanor, sulkily.

"Yes; I have pricked your conscience too deep, and you retire on your womanhood. Go home and look after that girl; the boy is past looking after."

The agricultural labourers said that "The new Rector were a-courtin' Miss Evans, and they would soon make a match of it."

Squire Mordaunt said that the "New Rector and old Eleanor had had such a violent squabble, that he expected the announcement of their wedding would come off in a fortnight."

The Rajah of Bethoor said, "Curse the young fools! They never sleep. But, sleep or wake, I am a match for them. I will have the two Evanses and that Mordaunt."

And our Nawab said, "He has no real claim against you; he was but an adopted Mameluke. Jim, my dear, why did you prevent my cutting his throat when I had the chance. Never mind, child, we will have a fight together before we die."

And the Dean wrote a sixty-guinea article in the great half-yearly review, giving a history of the settlement of India by the English, and wound up by pointing out that in the remotest end of furthest contingencies, it was possible that the conquered race might attempt to assert their superiority.

And keen-eyed little Eddy noted all things. And one night, there being many native attendants about, he took it into his head to raise his brother's mosquito curtains, and slip into bed beside Roland. And Roland heard many things, in a night's whispering, which he had never heard before, gotten from the Nawab to Jim, and from Jim to Eddy.

CHAPTER XI.

THE arrival of our young friend, Edward, did not make much difference at the station at Belpore. Roland's men had seen him at Chatham, and he was welcomed by them as a great accession. Add to this, that everything was perfectly quiet again. There had been dreadful jangling at one time among the native troops about the cartridges, but Colonel Cordery had got together the havildars of the free native regiments, both Mussulman and Brahmin, and had had a great talk with them. He pointed out to them that he was not in command, and that this was entirely an unofficial meeting. He would give them his word of honour, as an English gentleman, that there was nothing worse than bees'-wax on the cartridges, and that the idea that the English wished to insult the Mussulmans, and degrade

the caste of the Brahmins, by making them bite cartridges greased with pork fat, or beef fat, was the wildest moonshine which ever entered into the mind of man. The Brigadier Sahib had told them so, but they would not believe him. He appealed to all our former policy in India, and begged them not to make fools of themselves.

When Colonel Cordery had done speaking, a tall man, who had been leaning over his chair as he sat, began to speak. It was the Nawab.

"Listen to me," he said. "Am I a high-class Brahmin? Have I in any way ever broken my caste?"

There were salaams, and a universal murmur of assent and admiration from the havildars, for our Nawab was known not only for his strict religion, but also for his vast charity and good-nature.*

* Of course my readers will see that the relations between the Nawab of Belpore and the Rajah of Bethoor are a dim shadow of those between the Nawab of Cawnpore and the would-be Jaghire of Bithoor, who lives in men's mouths as Nana Sahib—verily his deeds live after him. To refresh some memories, allow me to mention

“ Here is one of those very cartridges. Look at me. I believe as you do : is there one who dares say I do not ? ” and he put the cartridge in his mouth.

It seems to us now a slight act. It was a very important one, however. The Mussulmans thought they were being insulted, and the Brahmins thought that they were incurring everlasting damnation, by biting these cartridges. Here was a well-known Brahmin staking, as the Brahmins thought, his soul by biting one. They were satisfied for the time.

Was it midsummer madness ? Undoubtedly

that, even after the rejection of his claim to the Rajahship by the British Government, he still retained the money left by Bajee Rao, amounting to above *four millions sterling*. He had no claim to the title. He was an adopted son of the Pishwa—a Mameluke. Belpore is situated at the junction of the Indus and the Ganges, close to the ancient Mogul capital of Caracorum. It is to be noticed that Gibbon spells the name of this last-mentioned city with a C, but most later authorities with a K. Why ? While we are at useful information, it is worthy of remark, that the old King of Delhi, whom Dr. Russell saw being sick into a brass basin, and who told the doctor the thundering lie that he had filled eleven others of the same size that morning, was the descendant of that most noble gentleman Kublai Khan, the friend of the Poli. I wish Marco Polo could have seen him.

so. But have not nations more often maddened themselves on the subject of religion than on any other? Sheer folly! Why, no. A nation, or a portion of a people, who will fight for their faith, says in effect, "We believe in a future state, under conditions, and our life here is not half so valuable as our life there. Consequently, we prefer to die, sooner than forego certain conditions, which we believe to be necessary to the life everlasting." Jews have said so; witness Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Papists have said so; witness Capuchins and Jesuits, innumerable. Anglicans have said so; witness the little cross on the pavement before Balliol College, where Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer were burnt. Ultra-Protestants have said so; what Claverhouse saw and heard when he came crushing through the heather under Wardlaw will tell you that. Yes! a people, a section of which will not die for their faith, are but dead dogs, and should die as such.

It is a matter very dim and very hard to get at, this feeling of the *Brahmins* towards us. Liars were abroad, like the Rajah of Bethoor, who told them that these cartridges were pur-

posely invented to make them lose caste and incur damnation. It was a lie, an outrageous and wicked lie, but they believed it. Conceive any *man*, confessing any form of Christianity, being asked to insult the sacred elements to save his life. Yet it came to that with them.

I find none like my Shakespeare. He makes Nym (Nehmen, the man who *takes*) steal everything he can lay his hands upon, until at last he rises to the summit and head of stealing, by taking what?—a pyx. He could not even keep his hands off *that*, and was hung. These men believed, through such rascals as Nana Sahib, that we had stolen *their* pyx, and they desired to hang us. Now that blood is cool, one dares say so much.

But the effect of the Nawab's biting the cartridge was very great. Such perfect peace and harmony was restored that all went merry as a marriage bell, until Allan Gray's—I beg his pardon, Allan Evans'—arrival. There was a great lull. The men were reassured, and the best of them contrasted the lives of the Brigadier Sahib and the Nawab with that of the

Rajah, not by any means to the Rajah's advantage.

The Major, extremely Low Church, continued his Bible classes and his churches among the Pariahs, and those whom he could influence, and the Roman Catholic missionary and the German-Lutheran missionary worked away with a will. The Major told the Nawab, the Havildars, the Subadhars, the Brigadier, Colonel Cordery of Her Majesty's army, Jim Mordaunt, Eddy Evans, the Roman Catholic missionary, in fact every one who would listen to him, that they were all in a fair way for eternal destruction, particularly Eddy, who had fallen asleep in church, dropped his sword with a rattle, and, on awakening, had exclaimed in a loud voice "Right half-face. March!"

Not a soul minded the good Major, his denunciations were too general, and every one saw that he was doing good, and raising the tone of all. The native Hindoos had heard what he had said about *caste*.

"Caste! Who wants to meddle with their caste? I want them to read this book; there is no loss of caste in *that*. Let any touch *my*

caste. Let any man try to take this Bible, God's own book, from *me*. But let him make his peace with his Maker first, for his wife will be a widow."

So spoke our stout old Major, and all went pleasantly, for Meerut was not as yet, nor had Allan come to the confusion of counsel.

But there was a great change now in the pleasant little garrison. Lord Canning sent orders for the whole of the 201st to be withdrawn from Belpore except one company, and for the whole of the cavalry to be withdrawn except one troop. On which, Colonel Cordery, Brigadier Sahib, and the Major had a consultation.

The Brigadier was not by any means what Colonel Cordery considered a wise man; but he found himself surprised on this occasion, as most men do, who fancy that silent men are necessarily fools.

"We are to leave a company and a troop," said the Colonel. "Which shall we leave? there is no roster. You can do exactly as you like, you know."

“Lord bless you!” said the Brigadier, “as if there was any hesitation. Leave the young uns.”

“Which young ones?” asked the Colonel.

“Why *the* three. Leave Roland Evans, for that fellow has a prime minister’s head on his shoulders. Leave James Mordaunt (they are in the same troop), for he is a tom-cat that fellow; and we shall want tom-cats in what is coming, as you know as well as I, old man. And leave little Evans, for he is a little devil; leave his company.”

“You are master here,” said Colonel Cordery, “but come, I never gave you credit for such sagacity.”

Said the Major suddenly, “A man who has made so many messes of it as Brigadier Hancock is the very man I could trust.”

“Now don’t begin chaff, you two,” said the Brigadier. “I know you can beat me at that; I ain’t clever.”

“You are *wise*,” said the Major.

“Thanks, old Truepenny. But look here. How could we do better than leave these three boys here? They are only lieutenant, cornet,

and ensign, but look at them, could we do better?"

"Certainly not," said the Colonel.

"Look," said the Brigadier, "at what would come in case of a row-royal (which is coming). Why the Nawab can't exist without Jim Mordaunt, and Roland Evans and Edward manage Jim Mordaunt, and Jim Mordaunt can manage the Nawab. Bless you, politically speaking, it is the very best thing we could do."

"You know India, old man," said Colonel Cordery.

"Should do," said the Brigadier. "I have wasted the best part of my life here."

"Not wasted," said the Major.

"You mean that I have earned a good pension, and shall be able to live at Cheltenham. That is wasting your life, is it not? But if it is any satisfaction to you, I beg to state that I am *not* going to live at Cheltenham among broken-down collectors. I am going to see my time out here; and Lord help Rajah or Nawab who meddles with me. I would like to go to England and see cowslips and trout,

but I don't see Cheltenham. You mind what I say, and keep those three boys here."

So there were no Europeans left at Belpore, except one company of the 201st, and one troop of the cavalry regiment in which Roland and Jim were. The troops marched off down the river, by the patch of jungle where Jim's moonshee was murdered; and the company and troop marched with them to that point, and then halted.

"Good-bye, you two, Evans and Mordaunt," said the Colonel.

"Good-bye for ever," said that dreadful Major.

"Remember your trust," said the Colonel.

"Remember that your cause is the right one, and that God will back you," said that irrepressible Major.

And so they were gone, with the drums and trumpets, and the colours, and our three fellows were left alone, with 160 men all told, on the dusty road, opposite the place where the moon-shee had been murdered.

Roland, it so happened, in consequence of invalids, young as he was, was actually in

command of the cavalry. The infantry had a captain left them; a solemn young man, with a wall-sided head, who had two desires in life, to educate himself decently, and to do his duty. He had left Harrow five years now, but he had got on badly with his education. He was naturally heavy-headed and stupid, and he had consulted in succession Jim (who confessed himself an ass), Roland, and Eddy, as to the means by which fellows got to be clever. He used to sit with them and listen to their talk, apparently under the impression that cleverness was catching, like measles. But he found that it was not. His name was Captain Claverhouse, and on the way back to the now lonely station, dominated by the great white palace of the Rajah, he ranged alongside of Roland and said—

“What a quaint selection the Brigadier and the Colonel have made. I expected they would leave me, for I am notoriously wooden-headed, though a good fighter; but it seems so strange to leave you and your brother, and Mordaunt. You fellows would do better alive than dead, one would fancy.”

"Than dead, Claverhouse, I do not understand you," said Roland.

"Do not you know," said Captain Claverhouse, "that we are left behind here to die; do you not know that we were carefully selected as men who could die best, and leave the deepest mark behind us?"

"No! is that the case? Ethel! Ethel!"

"You may well say 'Ethel!' I say Emily."

"Shall we lose India?" asked Roland, suddenly.

"No; but over our graves will rush a wave of re-conquest, nobler in its aim, greater in its results, than the first one. We shall hear their footsteps as they pass over us, and—

'Our hearts would hear them and beat,
Though we lay for a century dead.'

as your brother sung last night. I thought you knew this."

Roland rode silent for a little time, thinking deeply. At the end of that time he bent from his horse, laid his hand on his commanding officer's shoulder, and said—

"My friend! the thing you speak of *shall not be.*"

“Who will prevent it?” said Captain Claverhouse, sadly. “Evans, I have so much to live for that I am loth to die. If you knew Emily, you would understand me. I could die, or you could die, but to leave Emily all alone—her aunt is not kind to her, sir, she wanted her to marry another man instead of me. But she will marry no one but myself. And to leave her all alone!—Evans, God has given you brains, can you help me with them?”

“I will do my best, Claverhouse. See you here, we must concentrate in the Nawab’s palace, that is certain.”

“Can we trust the Nawab?”

“Can I trust my brother, Eddy?” said Roland. “The Nawab is one of us. I would go to the deuce for the Nawab now. I know him. What a pity it is that Jim’s moonshee was murdered, he would have been worth £100,000. I say, Claverhouse, all orders must come from you.”

“Yes, but give me the office.”

“Give the order for infantry to follow cavalry, and see where I will lead you.”

“Where?”

"Through the native lines," said Roland.
"What are the odds against us?"

"Two thousand to one hundred, as far as I can make out," said Captain Claverhouse.
"Better not, had you?"

"Cornet Mordaunt!" shouted Roland, and up came our old Jim, jingle-jangle, who saluted.

"I say, Jimmit, old boy—hang it! I beg your pardon, Cornet Mordaunt, we are going to march through the native lines."

"All right, Roley Poley—I beg your pardon, Lieutenant Evans," replied Jim.

"I wish, sir, that you would be more respectful."

"That is the great fault in my character, you know," said Jim.

"But, Jim, I am going to take the men through the lines; and if you see any signs of insubordination, report it to me."

And so they marched. The native lines seemed quiet. These petted subsidiaries were at their usual avocations, lying in the shade and watching their wives cook their dinners. Our little band passed through them with a

dead silence on the part of the Sepoys, till they were nearly at the end of the lines. At that point Sepoy ferocity expressed itself, as did likewise old Shrewsbury training.

A young man, dressed only in dhoties, got himself incensed by the appearance of Jim (who really *had* an exasperating look); he rose from his dinner and confronted Jim.

"Puckah, Budah, Pudwallah," said that misguided young man to Jim, of all people. Jim, in spite of his old moonshee's lessons, was bad at Hindustani, but he understood *that*. He put spurs to his horse, and drawing his sabre, chased that young Sepoy into the desert, hunting him and turning him as a greyhound does a hare, and spanking him with the flat of his sword. The other Sepoys looked on, and made the nearest approach to laughing which they ever do. And if it had not been for Allan Evans, it is extremely possible that Belpore would not have seen what Belpore did see.

"I say," said Jim, riding up and ramming his sword home, "I am not much of a politician myself, having had my brains addled at an early age by strong alternate doses of

cricket, football, and Buttman's Greek Grammar, but I should like to know which party is going to begin."

"What do you mean?" said Roland.

"I mean which side is going to have the drop kick. We are in for a scrimmage, let us have it over. There lies the ball."

"We may avoid the scrimmage after all," said Captain Claverhouse.

"The Nawab does not think so," said Jim; "the odds are long against us, two thousand to one hundred all told. We are now utterly isolated from Europe, selected to die. Why should not we kick the ball? We can die game, of course. For me I have nothing left to live for. A man, I take it, only lives for a woman, and some one else has married the woman I wanted. Die game—yes, rats can do that. Give us the word, Claverhouse, or Roland, and we will kick the ball so far towards their goal that our game will never be lost."

"What do you propose?" said Claverhouse.

"Going now, one hundred and sixty strong, to the Rajah's palace, cutting his d——d throat, and burning his palace down. You

will have to do it sooner or later, why not now ? ”

“ We have no authority.”

“ *Make* it. India was not conquered by authority, was it ? and won’t be saved by it. Clive is dead, it seems.”

“ By his own hand,” said Roland.

“ There you go, with your Frenchism,” said Jim. “ But epigram is not argument, old man,” and Jim rather sulkily dropped back to the rear.

“ That young’un seems to me to have brains,” said Claverhouse.

“ He is not clever,” said Roland, “ but he is thoroughly honest. His advice is sensible enough, but you see that we could not act on it. We should not be backed up. I suppose we had better send our magnificent army to their quarters, and go about among our people to warn them—that will be the best thing, will it not ? ”

“ If you think so.”

Roland, from this moment, naturally took the command. How fit for it he was, we shall see soon. Good Claverhouse always spoke of

him as his brains. Action was not yet in activity, but it was beginning. Through everything which came, Captain Claverhouse, who gave the orders, was followed by Roland like a shadow ; the defence of Belpore was Roland's.

This was the first night on which they had realized their danger and isolation. The first thing which Roland did, when the troops were dispersed, was to send Jim with a particular letter to the Nawab, begging him to come to him at once.

Jim was as free at the Nawab's palace as any Pariah, a section of the Indian population very dear to this radical Nawab. "For God," he said to Jim, "exalts some, like the Rajah of Bethoor, and keeps down others. But not for their sins, friend. For my part, I look with respect on a man whom the good God has taken the trouble to smite." Jim ran in through court after court, and found the Nawab making a kite very diligently.

"I am making a fine kite," said the Nawab. "Come and help me. It is a Franklin kite, with a wire in the string. And, oh, my dear, we shall fly it in the next thunderstorm, and

we shall have the lightning in our own hands. And we shall have shocks, so that our elbows shall go together, or we shall be kill, like Oersted, but we shall have games and fun."

"Come down to European head-quarters, old boy," said Jim, "and never mind your kite."

"Oh, never mind his kite, his Franklin kite, his electrical kite. Jim, my dear, let us go, we two, and fly it; and hang the string to the Rajah's palace, and make lightning dawck into that hell, and blast it off the face of the earth."

"What! you are savage, too, are you, boy?" said Jim. "So am I. But I *want* you. Will you come with me?"

The Nawab rose at once and said. "Do you think that I would not go to the devil with you? Shall we fly our kite together? Oh, yes. Shall we bring lightning dawck into Gomorrah? Oh, sir! where is my jockey?"

Little Wilson soon appeared. "If you will have the goodness," said the Nawab, "to order my stud-groom, to order my pad-groom, to order my head syce to say to some of my

people in general, that if my cob is not round in ten minutes, I will at once have the whole of them broiled with cayenne pepper on a slow fire, I should feel obliged to you," and so the little fellow departed to do his errand.

The Nawab's "cob," which he prided himself on, as being an episcopal and entirely orthodox cob, was a blaze-faced chestnut of fifteen hands, from Australia, by Romeo out of Wimmera (she by Macknight's Premier out of Mitchel's Avoca). He showed his breeding in the most unmistakeable way. He was by no means light in his heels like his mother, but he had to a slight extent learnt the art of bucking. The Nawab's syces were not in the least degree afraid of getting behind him, though not one of them dare get on his back.

In about three quarters of an hour, the Nawab appeared, dressed on this occasion in the dress of his Mahratta forefathers, with a spear in his hand; and an uncommonly fine gentleman he looked too, all in white, bare-legged from the knee, with a white turban and plume. He looked paler and more serious

than he looked three quarters of an hour before, altogether a different man; he caught the reins from little Wilson and vaulted into the saddle, disdaining the stirrups, but sitting back and letting his legs hang.

The Romeo colt began bucking at once, and the Nawab sat back in his saddle until it really looked as if he would be thrown. But Jim and little Wilson saw him shortening the boarspear in his hand, and after the horse had bucked about three times, the battle between man and beast began.

The Nawab, sitting easily with dangling stirrups, with the shortened end of his boarspear began beating the horse over the head and ears; not one blow, or two, but an immense number, given right and left with the rapidity of lightning. The unhappy horse, stunned and dazed with the blows, kept under his rider with a terrible bit, succumbed very soon, bent his knees and lay on his side, the Nawab alighting on his feet.

Little Wilson was going to the Nawab's assistance, but Jim said, "Leave him alone, you fool, unless you want to be raddled about

the ears with the butt-end of a boar-spear. This is *good*. I have got his monkey up."

"By golly, you have," said the Newmarket man.

The Nawab kicked the horse up and vaulted on his back again, taking three or four turns round the square of the palace, with the boar-spear down between the Australian horse's ears. The fight was over, the man had won; then he rode up to Jim, put his feet in the stirrups, and said, "Now I am ready."

He was perfectly cool and calm, but very pale. Jim said, laughing, "I did not think that Master Slender had been a man of this mettle."

"Did you not?" said the Nawab. "I suppose you never heard of the Mahratta cavalry?"

Jim was obliged to confess that he had.

"Gar! I am a Mahratta, and so is that dog-devil the Rajah. I am devilish. Made lazy, idle, useless, by your British rule, in which you have only employed our lower classes in your wars, I had got sleepy. What was it you told me about those men from the

land of ice, who stripped themselves naked, and smote and slew ? ”

“ The Berserkers.”

“ I am a Berserker, I am a Mahratta Berserker. I will come and do all that you wish me. But let me ride and cool myself.”

Jim assented.

“ We are alone and unarmed. What say you to riding quietly through the native lines, and then up to the Rajah’s palace, insulting him, and then going down to Queen’s headquarters to make arrangement ? ”

Jim was perfectly agreeable. “ *It will do all the good in the world,*” he said. And so it did.

Jim and the Nawab set off at full speed, and were soon in the native lines ; the Nawab only with his boar-spear, Jim only with a sword. When they reached the lines Jim found his sword troublesome, it seemed, for he called up a grass-cutter, and unhooking it from the scabbard, gave it to the man to carry up to his quarters, wrangling with the man whether he should give him two pice or three. He called up some of the sulking Sepoys about, and bade them say what was fair for carrying an officer’s

sword up to the Queen's head-quarters. They decided three pice. So Jim, with the vexed air of a man who has had a verdict given against him, gave the grass-cutter two rupees, a thing not unnoticed by the Sepoys. After this the Nawab and Jim traversed the lines in the most careless manner, leading their horses, perfectly unarmed.

At one point a little brown child, perfectly naked, was lying in front of a hut, with its stomach in the sand right in front of Jim's horse. Jim took it up, kissed it, and set it on his saddle; the child laughed and crowed, and Jim laughed again, for he was very fond of children. But the child's father, a havildar Mussulman, came swiftly from his hut and tore the child away; while an ominous growl arose from both the Brahmin and Mussulman Sepoys around.

"You must be out of your mind," said the Nawab.

"What have I done?" said Jim. "I only wanted to be kind to the poor little beggar."

"You have done a thing which you had better have cut your throat than do," replied

the Nawab. "You have put that child on a pigskin saddle, and insulted every Mussulman in the lines, that is all."

"Have I made the child lose caste?"

"Caste! He has nothing to do with caste; you have merely insulted the Mussulmans."*

* A regiment of the native infantry of Bengal, previous to the mutiny, might, I believe, be analyzed pretty correctly as follows. It is the roll of the 34th. I beg my readers' pardon for boring them with details in a novel.

<i>Brahmins</i> , who will not work in any way for fear of losing caste	335
<i>Chettyars and Rajpoots</i> , Brahmins who have laid down their caste for a time	237
Lower-class Hindoos	231
Christians	12
Mussulmans	209
Sikhs	74
Total	1,089

Your high-class Brahmin appears, from collected and collated evidence, to be on the whole the most intolerable and unmanageable prig which this groaning earth has ever produced. One of the jolly old Jesuit or Capuchin missionaries represents a profligate laxity of religious opinion when compared to *him*. However, he wanted what he has got, and he has got what he wanted. Chettyars and Rajpoots represent in the Hindoo faith the Christians who sat in the *Galilee* of the Cathedral. Lower-class Hindoos are what in my sciolism I call tag-rag and bobbery. Christians, I believe mostly Lutheran (12

“I am merely a clumsy beggar,” said Jim, “but I did not mean any harm. Now for the Rajah.”

They rode swiftly into the Rajah’s courtyard—very swiftly indeed—and dismounted, watering their thirsty horses at one of his fountains; then they came slowly out again, leading their horses by the bridle, talking in English, and laughing very loudly. Of all the means which they could have conceived for insulting the Rajah, this was the most contemptuous. After having done this, they rode down to the head-quarters of the Queen’s troops, and joined in a council of war which was going on there.

There was, in addition to the military, the judge, the magistrate, the collector, the doctor, the joint magistrate, the parson. The parson was speaking as they came in.

among 1,089 to confess Christ—long odds, if you look at it, gentlemen). Mussulmans—an ill lot of Mussulmans, and who never would have been Mussulmans at all, but Christians, had various Popes sent any one but idiotic friars to Ajuk and Kublai Khun. Sikhs—your Sikh is a sad fellow. The rascal will actually eat pork and drink rum. But he can fight. Let the dim, confused fury of the great day of Sobraon speak for that, even if John Lawrence, saviour of India, is silent.

"What I have always tried to avoid," said the Padre, "is insulting them on the score of caste. It is perfectly untrue to say that I have ever done so."

"No one ever said you had," said the Judge, laughing. "*You* have been easy enough with them. The question is this. Which is the safest place for us in case of a row (which is coming). Hah! here come the Nawab and Cornet Mordaunt. Gentlemen, there is thunder in the air, and we wish to put up a lightning conductor; where have you been?"

"Cornet Mordaunt," replied the Nawab, "has been amusing himself by insulting the Mussulmans. I, on my part, have amused myself by insulting the Rajah."

"Reckless! Reckless!" said the Doctor.

"You think so, do you?" said the Nawab, carelessly lolling into an empty chair. "I can't say I agree with you. We are ready, and they are not. Cornet Mordaunt here has done a silly thing in placing a naked Mussulman child on a pig-skin saddle, but that only affects the Mussulmans. I called him a fool for doing it at the time, but I have thought

over it since, and I am not sure that he has not been rather lucky.”

Roland asked why.

“Because, Lieutenant, he has made a very distinct quarrel with the Mussulmans in *my* presence. He has spread dissension among their ranks. The Mussulmans will be at present for cutting his throat and mine. Now, on the other hand, I am a most excellent Brahmin, well known and well liked, and the Brahmins will not have my throat cut if they can help it. I tell you, gentlemen, that if we can keep, even at this time, from insulting the castes of the Brahmins we may get through. It all depends on that.

“The quarrel,” he continued, “between myself and the Rajah is nothing at all. We always squabbled from the time we were boys. I have always insulted him, because it is my habit to insult those I hate. He is an ill-born, ill-bred, ill-educated, ill-living, ill-looking, ill-speaking, ill-thinking son of a female Pariah dog. But it makes nothing, our quarrels. Mordaunt has saved his life from my knife once, and if the dog felt gratitude, he would

feel it for that. But he knows nothing but evil, and he will ruin us if he has a chance. For the men in these regiments, as many would be for me as for him, providing their caste is not insulted. I have never broken my caste, and they know it, and can trust me. Bah! the dog would cut pork to-morrow, if he liked it."

"I had cold pork for tiffin, Nawab," said the Doctor.

"What a nasty beast you must be," said the Nawab, with perfect good-humour. "Bah! and in this climate, too. You will want something stronger than taraxacum for your *own* liver, if you don't mind. You have tinkered up so many livers, that I dare say you understand me."

"We shall want 'Dent de lion' here soon," remarked Eddy.

"I wouldn't waste my time in making silly puns, if I were in your place," said Jim. "You may think it fine, but we don't. No one laughed."

"Now, gentlemen," said the Nawab, "I think we may assume this: that these men will not rise, or will, at the worst, rise some

for me and some for the Rajah, if their caste is let alone. Padre Sahib, who is of high caste, has told me that his brother Padres have been found willing to be burnt alive sooner than lose caste. The place, I think, he mentioned, was Smithfieldpoor."

Assent from the Padre. The Nawab had now gathered his legs under him in his chair, and had broken his boar-spear, first into two, then into four lengths, across his knee. But he was quite quiet.

"Then it all comes to the same thing, gentlemen. It all comes inexorably, and quite eternally, and never-ending fortuitously, to the same, exactly devilish thing: all fiends in the seventh depth of Hell, gnawing at his bones with red-hot iron teeth. It all comes to this, gentlemen. We shall pull through if we keep these men's caste respected. That last wife of mine—my only wife now, Padre—I got her and saved her from him; and he hates me for it. And curse him, by all gods ever invented, let him come after her. Let him come after her, with ten thousand flaming devils. Let him bring the Sheitan himself. Let him——

I want his heart's blood, and I will have it," and he leaped on his legs, and rammed the head of his boar-spear deep into the table.

"I say, draw it mild, old chap," said Jim, quietly. "You are cutting it a deal too fat, you know."

"I ask pardon," said the Nawab. "I forgot myself."

"You did, *rather*," said Jim. "Cutting a man's throat is one thing, but catterwauling about it beforehand is another. I am ashamed of you. Look at the pains I have taken with your education, and see my return."

"I beg a hundred pardons; I forgot myself. Jim, my dear soul, pull that boar-spear out of the table."

It is a singular thing, but this lazy Hindoo, in his intense fury, had struck the clumsy spike so deep into the table that no one could move it. The Nawab laughed: "An emblem of my determination. When a child of a year old can pull that spear-head from the table, I will desert you, and those I have got to love among you,—Jim, and one whom he forbids me to name, and Roland, and Ethel, and Miss Elea-

nor Evans (I wish we had her here), and Squire Mordaunt, and Young Mordaunt, and Eddy, and his Allan Gray. I am sorry that I was devilish, but it is in our blood. You understand me about the caste: it must not be interfered with. Now, again, dear Judge, should you not shift to my quarters?"

"Not at once, surely," said the Judge. "Let us keep the white feather in our pockets."

"Yes, you are right," said the Nawab, "but let it be understood that if these fellows go mad, your home is with me."

"That was well said," said Captain Claverhouse.

"I love the English rule," said the Nawab. "It has debarred me from military exercise, which was perhaps wise, because I might have been an infernal devil, like——"

"Leave it alone, old man—stow it," said Jim.

"But I can strike a blow. I am a Mah-ratta, and I will strike it for you. Bless your hearts, all of you, we shall be perfectly safe there for six months. These fellows have no leaders. Where is John Lawrence?"

“In the Punjaub,” said Roland.

“I know *that*—but where?”

Roland did not know.

“It does not matter much. We can hold out in case of the worst. The Chupatties are round, but I can make a stalemate of it with the Rajah, if you don’t make the men jealous. On our next meeting we will decide about the retreat to my palace in case of a crash. Roland Evans, Edward Evans, and James Mor-daunt, would you come home with me?”

CHAPTER XII.

ROLAND, Jim, and Eddy went home with the Nawab, and he told them why he wanted them. "I made a fool of myself to-day," he said, "and I wanted you to see why. I want you to see my wife."

It was such a strangely difficult subject that Roland himself would not tackle it. Eddy did. "I thought you had many wives, sir—as many as the Jewish patriarchs?"

"I have but one now, sir," said the Nawab.

"I should think you must be glad of that," said Eddy. "If I was going to marry anybody I should die of fright the day before the ceremony. One would be enough to frighten me to death. Solomon apparently retained his intellect to the last with over six hundred."

"Lor," said Jim, "if I was ever to marry anybody, I would have it all my own way for

six months, about which time she would get the upper hand.”

So they laughed off a very delicate subject, and went along to the heavy gate of the Nawab's palace, which was slowly swung open to admit them. Roland now, for the first time, saw the Nawab's plan of fortification. There was no show of guns from the outside walls; they could easily have been battered into ruin by artillery, though that would have taken some time. But the inside wall, built recently, was fit to defy almost any artillery likely to be brought against it. It was a zigzag wall, of very heavy construction, mounted in casemates, or the best imitation of them that Jim, the Nawab, and a tipsy discharged artilleryman could make. The plan of these two bright young men was this, to put the outer wall, built by the Nawab's father in the good old times, between themselves and the new wall, and to arm that so well that, even supposing it half-destroyed, human existence would become impossible between the two walls, and an assault would be impossible. The palace itself, and the grounds around it,

were on an impregnable cliff, on three sides, and the Nawab pointed out with great glee that he commanded from his highest point the palace of the Rajah. "Let him misbehave, my dears, and we will have his pretty house about his ears in a very short time."

"I see no protection from vertical fire," said Roland at once.

"Even if they try it," said the Nawab, dismounting, "we have casemates. Please come with me, and, in the name of British rule, never say what you have seen this day."

He led Roland through many courts, which got more and more solitary as they went on. Then he unlocked a door in a high, white wall, with a key; he locked it after him, and began descending many steps into what had once been a garden, but which was now tangled and wild, and seemed to have been so for many years. At the end of this way a sculptured rock, into which went a deep, black archway, sculptured with the images of devils, as it seemed to Roland—of gods, as it seemed to the Nawab.

They passed into the silence and gloom,

monstrous figures loomed all around them, and the light was dim. "Take my hand," said the Nawab; and Roland took it, and spoke in a whisper.

"I never heard of these caves."

"Of course you did not," said the Nawab; "I should be very much surprised if you had. My people are not talkative. These are the temples of Belpore, the existence of which the Judge stoutly denied in a learned antiquarian pamphlet, when Haussmann, the German archæologist, asserted their existence, and got leave from Government to examine them. Haussmann may rummage in Indian manuscripts, and may find out their existence; but there is nothing to prevent my entirely denying their existence. Haussmann may come to me and say, 'Show me the temples of Belpore, Herr Nawab;' and there is nothing to prevent my saying, 'Herr Haussmann, I see what you have been reading. You have been reading the words of Naraballah. What does that word mean in Hindustani, Herr Antiquarian?'

"Well, it certainly does not mean anything at all,' says the German.

“ ‘Why,’ I say, ‘you with your learning—you to be so grossly deceived by a book like that! The names mean nothing, the book means nothing but “Gulliver’s Voyages.” My father pulled down the temples.’ And I got Haussmann up an old moonshee, and the moon-shee confirmed me, for my father has pulled down one pagoda which his uncle built, out of spite.

“That moonshee was put up to lie, but he lie too well. Haussmann says, ‘What was the date of the pagoda pulled down by the late Nawab?’ And he reply, ‘Twenty-five years; I saw him build.’ ‘But how old are you?’ says Haussmann. ‘Four hundred years,’ says the moonshee. And the lie counteracted the truth, and I got the Judge to put down the impudent German in a conclusive pamphlet, where he prove they were not temples at all; and here we are in them, you and I.”

“But does the Rajah know of them?”

“Not he. What does he know but devilry? There are but three or four who do know. The secret has been an heirloom with us. Our old enemies found out that this was an ugly

place to attack. The power which these caves give me is enormous. You have doubtless seen Pelissier, Marshal of France ? ”

Roland said, laughing, that he had heard of him.

“ Did he find that caves and Arabs would be too much for him ? Did he build them up with the Arabs inside ? Was he a good general ? Hah ! We know the value of well-provisioned caves ; we will call them, in future, casemates. Will you see them for curiosity ? ”

They were curious enough, without doubt ; but Roland cared little about them. The Nawab led him on through arcade after arcade, until a glimmer of light was before them.

It was a little slit in the limestone rock, covered on the outside with creeping shrubs. Peeping out he saw the whole town of Belpore laid out below him, and the native lines about four hundred yards away at their feet.

He did what he very seldom did ; he uttered a loud oath. “ Why,” Roland said, “ you might make the lines and the town impossible of occupation here by one solitary gun.”

The Nawab was amused immensely. “ Were

my forefathers fools," he said, "or did they build Attock? Did they give you trouble in your conquest of India? I think they gave you some. Your life is utterly in my hands at this moment, Roland Evans. Here is a loaded revolver, and I could shoot you down like a dog. I could leave your body here, and by a word have your brother and your friend murdered, and the whole game begun with an immense chance of success. I could outbid the Rajah, or make friends with him, leaving the responsibility on *him*, and securing myself a freedom in case of failure. Why do I not do it?"

"Ah, why?" said Roland; "your reason?"

"Because I am with you—because I am with you, body and soul. Why did you and the Colonel speak of me as you did when your brother began to make friends with me? Treat us like gentlemen; we are, in our way, as fine gentlemen as you are."

"Well, there has been a great mistake about that," said Roland; "but at the present moment I beg to remark that Dean and Adams' revolvers, used theatrically for oratorical purposes, are uncommonly likely to go off;

so if you will be kind enough to hand me that one, I shall be much obliged."

The Nawab laughed again, and by passage after passage they came to the upper air, in another little garden, an alum-bagh, and the Nawab, turning to Roland, said, "What do you think of me now?" meaning with regard to his defences.

Roland understood him to mean, what did he think of him personally, and he answered, "I think you a very good fellow, but weak in your intellect."

"That certainly," said the Nawab, with ready good-nature. "If we had not been weak in our intellects, you never would have had India. We fight as well as you do, or nearly as well; but we have no brains. Yet you are our lords and masters. And to tell you the truth, I wish you to continue so. Now come on and see my wife."

"Is she Hindoo?" asked Roland.

"No, she is French—Christian—Papists, I think you call her sect. From Algeria. She has been trying to point out to me the differences between your sect of Christianity and

hers. But being, as you just said, as one deprived of understanding, I have not made it out at all. If we both live to the age of Fatoor (who, you will remember, was the Fakir of Dinosapore, and who lived to the age of 840 years, and is, consequently, confounded with the Jew's Methuselah) she may possibly make me understand the differences between the Christian sects; for the present I am in the dark. I sit and make electrical kites while she explains."

"You are a quaint fellow, Nawab," said Roland, laughing.

"Not so quaint as you, though," said the Nawab. "You are what my wife would call 'Devil's-own quaint.' You English, she says, are all mad, and there is no doubt about it."

"Why are we mad?"

"Why are you here? Could you not let us go to the devil our own way. What brought you here? You are all mad, and I am the maddest of all madmen because I love you. Depart, you English, and leave me and the Rajah to settle scores. I will found a dynasty which shall last my lifetime, and I will build a

city and a tower whose top shall reach to heaven." And then he made a low and vulgar remark about a great living potentate, which any gentleman would die sooner than repeat.

"Never mind *him*, or the Tower of Babel, or the confusion of tongues. You leave French politics alone. The French Emperor will not trouble *you*. If he discounts his bills at a high premium, and leaves his son to pay the principal, it is no business of ours. What I want to know is this—have you lost caste in any way by marrying this French lady?"

"Not a bit," said the Nawab. "Not in the slightest degree. I will tell you the truth. This lady was courted, spoken to, what you call it, by the Rajah, and she hates the Rajah. I, loving European manners, fall in love with her, and propose. She insists at once that all the other ladies be banished. I consent at once. I say to her, 'Madame, you are worth all the women in all the world; I want a trusted friend, in you I found her,' and she consents, but the priest of her faith could not marry her to me.

"I represent to him that he should. That Madame (a religious woman) desires it. I tell

you, my dear Roland, that he would not have one word to say to us. He says I must be baptize, I dare him to attempt it. I am not Christian, my Roland, though I love Christians. She rebel and I rebel, and she quotes the example of Ajuk Khan married to a Nubian Christian, which marriage was allowed by the Pope's emissaries. Of that of course you know. [Roland did not.] So in the end my wife had in a German Lutheran missionary, 'for he is a Christian,' she said, and we were marry. And she what you call Papist, insisted on what she call the Anglican ritual, for he would not use the Papist, and he said in his ritual, 'For richer, for poorer, till God does us part.' And I thought that good. And it shall be so between me and my wife. The poor girls are provided for. It is past. It is gone. There is no more of them. I have a wife now, 'For richer, for poorer, till death does us part.' You fools, you English, you have abolished the suttee of the wife for the husband, you have only introduced the suttee of the husband for the wife. You have given us a great gift, my friend."

Roland bowed his head. Singularly enough, he of all people broke down and got hysterical. Climate one will suppose. He said, "God knows I am doing suttee now."

"I know," said the Nawab. "But tell us, is it Mary Maynard or Ethel?"

"Why how could you doubt?" said Roland. "How did you know?"

"Never mind," said the Nawab, "is it Ethel?"

"Of course it is," said Roland. "But——"

"Never mind that little word," said the Nawab. "She is Jim Sahib's sister. I said so. See here. My wife reads the Hebrew Scriptures, and she reads of a love surpassing that of woman. That love I have for James Mordaunt. And all this Indian hell shall rise from its depths against us; but if you will be my friend, we will beat it. And you shall have the honour. And you shall go home to Jim's sister, and say, 'Jim is kill, and Eddy is kill, and the poor silly Nawab is kill, but I am come home with my glory to marry Ethel'; you shall see all that. But you must be secret. Now we will come and visit my wife."

Mrs. Nawab, as Eddy and Jim persisted in

calling her, was a nice, quiet, clever little French-woman. She declined to sit cross-legged, but sat on a rocking-chair. I beg to remark that I am going back in my narrative, and at the point where we take her up she was merely gossiping with Eddy and Jim Mordaunt, while Roland and the Nawab were in the caverns.

She could talk English, this Mrs. Nawab; talk it a little too plainly, not measuring the value of her words.

“I am glad to receive you two Englishmen. Mr. Evans [to Eddy], you are very ugly, but your face is good. Mr. Mordaunt, you are very handsome, but you look cruel. Did you ever murder any one, for example?”

“Heaps and heaps,” said Jim, “in imagination.”

And so they talked, laughing at the mistakes in one another's language for an hour or two in the cool white piazza, and they had coffee, which Madame herself brewed, and they had pipes, and enjoyed themselves immensely, and were very innocent, amusing, and talkative indeed.

Now, be it remembered, that I am not in any

way defending these good people's doings. I am only trying to say how things went. Among his Anglicanisms, the Nawab had started a low, disreputable, long, English clay pipe, such as you see laid in heaps on the table in the smoking-room of English pot-houses, what we used to call, as young men, a long churchwarden. This he had smoked so long that he had coloured the bowl all up one side ; and it now occurred to Madame, who was an old Algerian campaigner, that she must put aside her own hookhah, and smoke her husband's pipe.

He objected, but she pleaded for it, and so prettily that they all laughed, and at last he gave way. He filled it for her, and she lit it and smoked, while the others smoked cheroots, and they all sat cross-legged, chatting.

* * * * *

Allan Gray, arriving at the Captain's compound and asking for Eddy, was directed that Sahib Edward Evans was at that same time of speaking in the palace of the Nawab of Belpore. Pursuing him to that abode of heathenness, and finding his way through nearly innumerable servants, he discovered his pet

sitting cross-legged in a row with a heathen gentleman. Rather objectionable Roland, intensely objectionable Jim, and a French lady, sitting cross-legged on a carpet on the ground, smoking away at a long churchwarden pipe.

He was so unutterably horrified that he was stricken dumb. He could say nothing at all. He was received with a very noisy hail, and every symptom of welcome; as for Eddy, he fairly ran into his arms, and was rather surprised at the coldness of his reception. James and Roland were also most friendly.

As for the Nawab, there was nothing he would not have done for him; but Allan was like a dog at a fair. Being for the first time in his life brought face to face with a real heathen, and finding him a most affectionate gentleman, he was exceedingly gawky and lost. Madame tried a little badinage on him, and would have had him take her pipe; but she only horrified him the more.

He seemed at last to have got into a land utterly forgotten of God, and given over to the devil—a land which seemed to him to have corrupted, lowered, nay, even blackguardized,

such very pure and kindly people as Roland and Eddy. It was an intolerable matter.

To find an intolerable thing, with Allan, was the very same thing as setting to work to mend it. The odds were enormous against him. He could not speak the language, but his duty was to him singularly clear. He must preach the Gospel in this land in *any* language. Through want of faith we had lost the gift of tongues; through faith we might regain it. He would preach the pure Gospel in English, be the consequences what they may.

Alas, poor lad! There are various ways of doing God's work, and yours was one. Some cursed you for their ruin, and curse you yet. You yourself thought that you had failed. Yet as my brother says,

"Not all who seem to fail, have failed indeed,
What though the seed be cast by the wayside,
And the birds take it—Yet the birds are fed."

Perhaps there is a Pariah or two at Belpore who remembers the kindly, gentle, young enthusiast. At any rate he brought on the cataclysm, which was well avenged, that any one may preach the Gospel now at Belpore.

CHAPTER XIII.

THERE was perfect silence still, and the dawn came most regularly. The Parsees had gone round to every one instantly, after the departure of the European troops, and persuaded them to make their wills, and send them to Europe ; and no one laughed at them. A Calcutta paper, however, got hold of the fact, and wrote a screaming leader on it, a real slasher, the sort of thing which would make you split your sides with laughing. Everything was quite quiet ; there was no danger at all.

Allan seemed to speak very little to any of his compatriots except Eddy. With the others it was merely good-day, and good-bye. To Eddy, he talked a good deal, and they cross-examined Eddy, but Eddy said that Allan only talked to him about his soul, so they forbore. And in reality Eddy spoke merely the plain

truth. Allan merely talked to him about the state of his soul, which he thought immensely unsatisfactory. He was perfectly silent to every one about his great scheme. He had got a rascally old Brahmin for a moonshee, and he was learning all about caste. Eddy's soul could wait until he had done his best to blow the British Empire to pieces.

Our friends had their little mess still, and talked over their neighbours.

"That is a queer fellow, that half-brother of yours," said the Doctor. "Does he drink?"

"Drink!" said Roland, "he is a teetotaller!"

"The pupil of his eye is very much enlarged," said the Doctor. "Did you ever hear of a place called Hanwell?"

Roland had heard of it.

"Ah!" said the Doctor, "it is a nice easy distance from London, and extremely well conducted. Claverhouse, the claret is with you."

"Why did he come here?" asked Claverhouse, pointedly to Eddy.

Eddy blushed scarlet, and said that he did not know. Whereas he knew perfectly well,

for Allan had told him that very morning something which gave him the clue to Allan's behaviour. Allan, in his self-justifying way, had put all sorts of reasons before Eddy for his extraordinary expedition to India. The state of the Hindoos, the state of Eddy's soul, tanks, railways, everything. But at last he had let out the very real truth that he did not care for life without Ethel, and that he had discovered that Ethel did not care for life without Roland.

The little fellow dared not speak. There was danger and wrath abroad, and anything might happen. Roland and Allan were rivals. It was terrible. But a curious thing is that the honest little lad trusted Allan as well as he did Roland, only he dared not speak.

"I wish," said the Judge, "that he had gone anywhere else. You will forgive me saying, my dear Evans, that the man is a dreadful bore."

"He cannot have bored you much, Judge," said Eddy.

"Child! child!" said the Judge, "he has shortened my very worthless life. What have I done that he should look up all my decisions

in important cases, and tell me that I am an unjust judge ? I am nothing of the kind. He says to me also, that the conquest of India was the grossest act of piracy ever committed, and that if I loved myself so far as to partake of the spoils, I might at least give just judgments. I always thought I was so very just."

"He has been at me too," said Captain Claverhouse. "He said that we had no right whatever to annex this territory. The only object of war," he argued, "was to spread Christianity. Whereupon I referred him to the history of Japan, where a few ships would have saved the missionaries. He shifted then, for he has no education or little, and said that he meant Protestant Christianity ; the Protestants were never aggressive. I mentioned Silesia to him, and with most singular honesty he confessed that he knew nothing of that small piece of annexation. He is a good fellow, but he wants grinding."

"But he is a sort of turnip-ghost at a christening," argued the Doctor. "Why did he come here ? He will play the deuce with

us before he has done with us. Of all times in all creation, for such a dissociated radical to appear. Never mind, my dears, I have seen death too often to fear him."

"Now look you here, Doctor," said the Captain, "we shall pull through this, only it is a great pity that there is not one with influence over this turnip-ghost missionary of a man, to restrain him."

At this moment the Nawab, who was sitting beside Jim at the lower end of the table, broke out into a roar of laughter. Jim had been telling the Nawab, in a stifled whisper, how they had beaten the London Rowing Club at Shrewsbury regatta; and the joke hit the Nawab. It was impossible, of course, for Captain Claverhouse to be angry with a royal prince who had all their lives in his hand, still he might scold Jim.

"Mr. Mordaunt, I wish you would not make the Nawab laugh just as I was speaking—I really ——" but he said no more, for Roland's white hand was laid suddenly on his chest, meaning "silence," and Roland walked softly down the room, and sitting beside the Nawab,

put his arm affectionately over his shoulder, in schoolboy fashion.

As for Captain Claverhouse, he was so paralyzed by what he saw at the door immediately behind the Nawab, that I go at once to other authors to say how scared he was. But I have no author who will help me in any way. For extreme fantasticisms the best authorities I know are Rabelais and the late Artemus Ward. But Rabelais can seldom be quoted (having lived before the time when men found out that you could have humour without dirt—that is to say, 300 years before Dickens and Thackeray), and Artemus Ward is at times feeble and inconsecutive. Artemus Ward may talk of sky-blue fits (which, by the way, is Dickens'), but he could not rise to the level of the American Revolution, any more than Dampmartin could rise to the level of the French. Captain Claverhouse, had he found his tongue, would have scolded like Dampmartin. But he was simply stunned and held his peace. While Roland kept his strong arm tightly round the Nawab's neck.

This was the eve of the Indian mutiny. The

most reckless, causeless, stupidest revolution ever planned. Like all ill-considered and causeless revolutions, it failed. It was evil against good, and good won. Think, sir, what India would be now, had the revolution succeeded. Come, sir, think of that.

In revolutions—I am young, but I have watched many—you raise the devil. For example, June, 1848. The devil was raised here at Belpore in 1857. The devil was the Rajah of Bethoor. The man who raised him was the young religionist, Allan Evans.

CHAPTER XIV.

FOR behind the back of the unconscious Nawab, who had Roland's strong arm round his shoulder, stood the Rajah himself, and Allan Gray behind him.

The astonishment of the whole room was expressed by a profound silence. No one was in the least degree up to the occasion, or able in any way to form an idea of what had happened. The Nawab was the last to see him, and only saw him after he heard his voice, and then he rose and confronted him.

The Rajah and the Nawab were both fine and handsome men, though the Rajah was puffy with vice and high feeding; had there been one of those sudden and swift Asiatic encounters, either man might have gone down in an instant. James Mordaunt was standing partly between them, with a view of stopping

hostilities, when the Doctor pulled him by the sleeve, and whispered, "You are hampering your man;" on which Jim removed.

In reality, the Doctor saw most plainly that, in case of a *fracas* between the two Indians, the Rajah would most certainly put his sword through James's body, and apologise for it afterwards. But it was not to the Nawab that the Rajah spoke, he addressed the whole company:—

"Gentlemen, there seems to be some misunderstanding and mistrust about me. I have come quietly, an Indian gentleman among English gentlemen, to give explanations, to remove all doubts and difficulties, and to reassure myself about our friendly relations. This gentleman has consulted much with me, and we have exchanged opinions, and are agreed. Gentlemen, you are in danger here."

"We are perfectly aware of it, Rajah," said Captain Claverhouse. "Who is that behind you? not Mr. Evans, whom God seems to have misguided, but that attendant of yours, who has sat down in that chair by the door. Mordaunt, go and collar that fellow, and kick

him out. What the devil does the fellow mean by sitting down in the presence of a British officer without leave? Are you come here to insult us, Rajah?"

Jim proceeded on his errand instantly, but the young man had vanished. The Rajah, turning to see the result, only saw Jim, coolly standing with his back against the door, and he turned very pale, but retained his self-possession entirely. His race knows no fear of death. He thought that his time was come, and, beast, liar, treacherous, cruel hound as he was, he knew from the traditions of his forefathers how to die. We, of all people, should allow that to the Brahmins.

He looked quietly at Claverhouse and Roland, and laid his hand quickly upon his sword—a pretty, dangerous, little Liège toy. Roland understood him at once. "You are as safe as if you were in your own zenana, sir. James, come away from that door."

He knew that he was safe now. "By" (some of his gods), he thought, "these fools! If I had one of them up at my palace, he

should not get off like this. Let me try them on their own ground."

"You teach us Asiatics a good lesson," he said boldly. "We are enemies. If at this moment, I had one of you in my palace, he should never leave it alive. You are pirates, dacoits, and villains. You had no right in India. Your wrongs and your robberies here would make hell move. Your Hastings was a robber, whom you acquitted; your Clive was a robber, who, utterly unable to bear the burden of his sins, killed himself. I am your bitter enemy, but I am safe, because I am among English gentlemen. I am in your power! will any one raise a hand against me? Not one. *I know you.*

"I have trusted myself among you, because I wished to make friends with you, and to save you. I desire my rights, which are entirely incontestable, no more. I have explained my case to this English gentleman, and he agrees with me."

Eddy ran quickly up to Allan Gray, and caught his hand. "Allan! Allan!" he said, "you have not been listening to this man?"

“You are a fool,” said Allan. “He is prepared to hear the truths of Christianity; what is more, allow them to be preached, in a bold and free manner, as they should have been preached before.”

The Padre bounced up, and cried out, “Have you been preaching against caste in the native lines, under the protection of this man?”

“I have, sir,” said Allan; “and I glory in it.”

“Then may the good God forgive you our blood. I am an old man, and it does not matter. But these bonny, innocent boys! Well, well. I stayed here and lost my wife, and I said to myself, ‘I will make rupees for the little ones’; but *they* all died; and I said, ‘I will stay on here, and do what I can among these heathen, for Christ’s sake, that I may meet my wife and my little ones in heaven.’ A selfish motive. Has any poor native wanted a rupee while I had one? Am I not poor? Have I not tried to rival the Jews and Parsees in their charities without their means! Am I not a broken old man? Have not Hemmetz, the Lutheran, Faoli, the Papist, and I, worked together here for years, trying to bring them to

the dogmas of Christianity by the example of our lives? Have we not agreed to leave caste alone? and now here is a new-comer, who has brought the house of so many years' building about our ears!"

"Don't preach, Padre," said the Doctor, quietly. "Mr. Allan Evans, have you any idea of what you have been doing?"

"Yes, sir. I have been carrying Christ's banner into quarters where it should have been carried before."

"You have been carrying the devil's banner, sir. That man has instigated you to do the only one thing you should have left alone. He has fooled you to the top of your bent, sir. He has advised you to do what he wants done. Our blood is on your head. You had better never have been born than have come here."

"What did I tell you?" said the Rajah.

"You were right, sir," said Allan. "We will come away." And they turned away.

"One moment, Allan," cried Eddy. "Do not go with that man. I beg of you, by your old love for me, do not go with that man."

"I came here for love, and I find a brothel.

Those I loved and trusted gone from their faith, their purity, their religion. Ministers ashamed of the gospel they vowed to preach; men educated as Roland and you have been, sitting with heathens and Papist women, with the surroundings of a low English pot-house. [Alas for Madame Nawab's pipe!] I have done with my countrymen, my relations, and life. I shall die, but I shall die preaching God's own Gospel. Good-bye, for ever, Eddy."

That leal little fellow, whom Ethel would never appreciate, was not going to let him go like this. He dashed at him, and cried, "Allan, you are utterly deluded," and cast himself between Allan and the door.

Not one of the others moved. Eddy got his back against the door, but Allan scornfully moved towards it, and laid his hand on Eddy's shoulder.

"Allan, by the old Shrewsbury days, by our old Field Lane days, by every pleasant hour we have ever had together, stay with your countrymen in this dark hour. Let race prevail with you, Allan; let blood prevail with you. Do not leave our brother *now*. You are misguided;

you are mad. That man is a dog and a villain. Ask Roland——”

Ask Roland! the favoured lover of Ethel. Oh, Eddy! what evil spirit caused you to raise the devil into that powerful, up-looking, bloodhound face, and those bloodhound eyes?

The dykes which Allan had raised round the furious tide of passion which was in him, by religion, by order, by rule, broke down here at once. The man was never a *sound* man. There had always been depths of potential ferocity in him, deeper and fiercer than ever were in Jim Mordaunt; and he had had wit enough to know it, and like a fine and wise fellow as he was he had kept them in order. But at this moment, at Eddy's unhappy allusion to Roland, added to the excitement of the situation and climate, his habits of life broke down suddenly. He seized Eddy, and with the strength of a lion cast him against the Rajah, uttering a loud and furious curse against Roland.

If Aunt Eleanor could have seen her work now, she would be inclined to drown herself. Her one folly, that of throwing Allan against Ethel to plague him, had caused this. That

Allan, at the mere mention of Roland's name, had gone mad, and had cast poor Eddy against the Rajah. "Be sure thy sin will find thee out." Poor lady, she had to dree *her* weird.

Eddy was sent staggering against the Rajah, and the Rajah was sent staggering against the stone door-post, against which he fell, cutting his forehead deeply. The last seen by any European eye, save two, of that Rajah was seen now. A tall, very handsome man, in green velvet and gold, with white trousers. Deadly pale, with the blood dripping over his face, which he wiped with a French cambric pocket-handkerchief, bordered with lace. Before he followed out Allan Gray, he turned to the party, and said, very quietly,—

"I am sorry that this interview, meant so well on my part, should have terminated so abruptly. It was entirely my clumsiness. I hope that Ensign Evans has not been hurt. You know as well as I do that a struggle is coming, and you know on which side I am. My claim to be Jaghire of Bethoor has been refused by your parliament, and I am going to

test the power of the British empire. I am the guest of Englishmen, and I am safe. I therefore warn you that the lines will be fired to-morrow night.’’

So, with the bloody cambric handkerchief in his hand, he bowed himself out into the dark Indian night, never to be seen again by any European eye, save Allan Gray’s, and another.*

Eddy was standing against the door, in blue and gold, and white trousers, with his sword-belt looped up, ready for evening parade. The others had risen, and were looking at the doorway, but they could not see Eddy. The image left on their eye was that of a tall man, in green and gold, who had passed out at the

* I must beg my readers to remember that this is fiction, that is to say, a dramatic accumulation of probabilities. The Rajah of Bethoor is not Nana Sahib, any more than the Nawab is Scindiah. Perhaps there never was such a nice Nawab as my Nawab. Yet Scindiah is wiser than he. The quasi facts about the Rajah, his works and his ways, have been taken, as I acknowledge, from papers of Lieutenant Willoughby—the young man who served God from his youth, and who never was ashamed of it, even at Addiscombe. Praying and fighting so uncommonly well together, my friends. There was once a man called Cromwell, as there was also a man called Louis IX.

door, waving a bloody cambric handkerchief behind him.

* * * * *

Dramatic and fantastic. Well, as I said before, if the Indian Mutiny was not *that*, it was nothing.

CHAPTER XV.

THE Rajah was gone. "Shut the door, Eddy, and come here," said Roland, sharply. "Claverhouse, here is the devil to pay sooner than I thought. Do you really believe that that rascal has egged my unhappily ignorant brother on to preach against caste?"

"Of *course* he has," said the Padre. "How can you, so clever, ask such a question?"

"Will they be up to-morrow night, then?" said Roland.

"No, they won't be up to-morrow night," said Captain Claverhouse. "Were you ass enough to believe that that fellow would give us warning? They will be up *to-night*, man. The moon will be up in two hours; they will therefore move in one hour and a half."

"Why not before?" asked Roland.

"Because they will want to distinguish

Indians from Europeans ; and the lines will not burn brightly for above half an hour."

"What are we to do, sir?" said Roland.

"I will give you my experience now, if you will give me your brains afterwards. Your troopers are in bed by now, for it has been hot. Go down, Mordaunt and you, to quarters and awaken them silently in the dark."

"Yes, sir, but the native servants?"

"Ah, that is a bother. Sham drunk and sing a loud song. Make believe that you are drunk, and are going to—(a part of the English establishment in India which I will call 999, Queer-street.) and sing * * *

"I am afraid we could not do that, sir," said Roland.

"Law, I thought that you University fellows were up to anything," said Captain Claverhouse.

"Jim and I, sir," said Roland, "are two of Doctor K——'s boys, and I don't think we could do that. The Doctor might hear of it. We will sham drunk and be noisy, if you please."

"Well, that will do. Tell the men to be ready to saddle at a moment's notice. Our object is to get the English officers to the

Nawab's palace in time. Your duty in future will be to give me your brains, of which I have few. At present it is to protect the Europeans to the Nawab's palace. You and Mordaunt go to the men in their beds, and get them ready. I trust nearly all to you, for cavalry in the dark is what no man dare face."

"What will be the signal, sir?"

"Oh, our bugles. We shall be down amongst you directly. But we must clear the bungalows of the women and children. Your troop must protect our rear. How soon can you get your men in the saddle?"

"In three or four minutes, I think," said Roland. "It is a great pity that the command of the troop has fallen on such a subaltern as myself."

"It is a piece of God's good mercy," said Claverhouse, "that Lummers and Rounders fell sick. Why I would go to the devil after you. You come of the breed which conquered India. Now Mordaunt and you go to your sleeping troopers, and wake them in this way. Put your hand on their foreheads, and they will awaken silently. If you shake them by

the shoulder, some one of them will cry out. Go off, you two boys, and do as I tell you."

"Where *did* you learn these details?" said Roland.

"In the Khyber Pass."

"But you could not have been in the army then."

"As a drummer I was. Never mind my antecedents. *I* rose from the ranks. This is not a time for long stories. Cut away. At the sound of our fifes and drums look after our rear. Cut away, Mordaunt. God go with you." And so they went to the dark night's work.

"You are quite ready for us, Nawab?" said Claverhouse.

"I have been ready 250,000 years," said the Nawab.

"Then would you mind going home?"

No. It appeared that the Nawab emphatically declined to do anything of the kind. "He be devil, they all be devil; by devil I shall not go home. I have provide everything, and I have no fight. I want fight, and I shall not go home, by dam."

CHAPTER XVI.

MEASURES well taken, but too late for some. Eddy, Claverhouse, and two other officers were just following Roland out of the door, to get their men hurriedly together, and get the women and children out of the bungalows, when a Company's officer, a young man of great promise—just married—ran into them, and hurriedly asked for a pistol.

“Are they up so soon?” said Claverhouse.

“Yes, yes; lend me your revolver.”

Claverhouse did so. The young officer put it to his own ear, fired it off, and fell dead across the mess-table.

Eddy drew back shuddering and deadly white, but Claverhouse said loud and firmly to him, “Evans! Steady!” and Eddy was perfectly steady at once.

“ Why has he done that ? ” whispered Eddy, aghast.

“ I suspect they have murdered his bride while he was away from her on duty,” said Claverhouse. “ Blow up bugles ! a hundred and sixty Englishmen against all hell ! ”

The bugles woke the strange, ominous stillness of the night, with the assembly. Roland’s trumpet was heard in reply, a sheet of flame shot up from the native lines, and nearly the most ghastly and fearful thing in the history of our empire was begun.

Roland and Jim had got their men together and mounted, and went at a sling trot down the long, dusty road past the piece of jungle where the moonshee was murdered. The fire before them blazed brighter and brighter, lighting up the road clearly. The moon was down as yet, but there was light enough for them.

Roland was particularly anxious not to get this jungle in his rear without support. He halted there for one instant, and but for one, for he heard Claverhouse’s jolly roar behind him, “ Go on, Evans, we are here.”

They slung on again, it was light enough

now, but they went cautiously. The first person they met was an English lady, hurrying on a child by the hand, and carrying another. She stopped for a moment and explained hurriedly to Roland that the child she carried was dead, but that the Sikhs had saved the one she was leading, and that the Sikhs were close behind her. She was barefooted, simply clothed in a long white night-dress, spotted with the blood of the dead child, and she had thrown round her neck, in her unutterable confusion and horror, the strap of an old Scotch fishing-creel, which bumped against her shoulders as she ran barefooted along the sandy road.

Next they met three officers' wives coming as fast as they could, two were leading a third along. One of the leaders was Peggy O'Dowd, the other Mrs. Kirk. The young woman they led was the bride of the man who had shot himself on the mess-table. And she was laughing, and singing her part in *Acis and Galatea*, which she had learnt two years before in the Philharmonic Society at Dublin.

Then they met a little child in its bedgown, all alone. And it said that the men had beaten

its ayah, but that the havildar Ben Allar had sent it down the road to ask its way to the house of the Nawab. He told Roland also, that he had lost his puppy, and would doubtless have entered into other details, but Roland had the opportunity of giving him into the hands of two native women flying along the road, who brought him to the Nawab's.

You may thus, if you are a man with the ordinary feelings of an Englishman, guess what was the temper of Roland as he approached the lines of these pampered mercenaries. But before he got dangerously near them, he found a little army approaching him, and he halted and challenged.

A cheery English voice cried out "Don't charge, Evans, if that is you, we are the Sikhs, Christians, Eurasians, and Europeans. We have all the women and children which we can get."

It was a captain of a Native regiment who spoke.

"My dear soul," said Roland, "we left you there too long."

"Well," said Captain Morton, "we could

not have come away before," which may sound prosaic, but which was perfectly true.

"Are there any left we can rescue?" asked Roland.

"I think not," said the E. I. C. S. Captain. "We were not prepared for this business to-night; we were very carefully put off our guard. All we can save I believe we have got here. Can we pass them on to your infantry?"

"We can escort them back," said Roland. "I suppose that it is no use going on."

"Well," said Morton, "it is no *use* certainly, our officers are all killed. But yet, but still——"

"I do not understand you," said Roland.

"Well, we shall all be dead soon, and a week or two sooner or later does not much matter. Could not you detach a king's officer to convoy these people to the rear, to your head-quarters, or even to the infantry, which you say is in your rear. I have twenty Sikhs who will follow me to the devil, and that, with your men, will make up eighty. We *may* die now; on the other hand, we may not. But it seems to me that we cavalry shall be of

small use in the defence of the Nawab's palace. Is not now the time to sacrifice ourselves?"

"Would you explain further," said Roland.

"Certainly," said Morton. "I have been long in India, and I think this is the beginning of a great crisis. Now is the time for a lesson to them. The odds against us are not great. We are eighty men to their two thousand. Come, sir, I tell you plainly, it rests in your hands to assist in the saving of India, or to assist in sending back her history for a hundred years."

"I quite think so," said Roland, quietly. "But I wish to know our chances of administering chastisement."

"Bring your troop and the Sikhs round this bit of jungle in the darkness, fall on them, and then ride home."

"But," said Roland, "I am bound to take care of these poor lads who follow me. We must pass this piece of jungle again, and we can be cut to pieces by a flank fire of musketry. Any officer could point *that* out."

"Yes," said Morton, "but can't you see that the Sepoys have cut all their officers'

throats, and that they have not *got* any officers? It is to my mind extremely possible that we shall live through it. And just think of the lesson."

"You speak wisely," said Roland. "I will do it. You can depend on your Sikhs."

"They have eaten our salt," said Morton, proudly. "Remember Chillianwallah."

Yes, it was all well enough, Ethel would love him better than ever now. She would tear her hair a little perhaps, and she would be cross to Aunt Eleanor, and time would go on, but she would know that he loved her, and that he died worthy of her. Morton was right. This was the beginning, and a lesson was wanted. One thing he could do. He could save her brother. All hopes of getting alive out of the hell before him were dead. Yet Jim might be saved.

"Cornet Mordaunt."

Jim came up and saluted.

"Cornet Mordaunt, the troop is about to advance rapidly to the front, into the native lines. You are ordered to escort the stragglers back to the rear of the infantry, and put your-

self under the orders of the Captain commanding."

To which, Jim, God bless him, poor fellow, said, "I will see you —— first."

"This is flat insubordination, sir, in the face of a mutiny about to grow to a revolution."

"Never mind those long words," said Jim. "Come, Roley, don't be a fool. Think of the old four-oar, the Unconquerables. What would the Doctor say, what would Aunt Eleanor say, if after so long I left you now? Roley, don't be a fool. Do you mean to say that you propose to send back to Ethel a disgraced and dishonoured brother? Why, my good Roley, I would sooner die than face Ethel, Meredith and my brother, if I went back. Come, sharp is the word, old fellow. They will see us directly. Cut away."

Roland gave the word of command, and they rode away round the jungle in fours. Roland and Morton heading the troop, and Jim riding on the flank, between the junction of our own men and the Sikhs. They went off at a sling trot, and they never altered their pace till the end.

What those unutterable devils, our pampered mercenaries, had been doing that night under the advice and guidance of the Rajah, is not to be told here. Causeless, aimless, brutish, shameless. They thought they had won. The bungalows were sacked, the fire of the lines was dying out, the late waning moon was rising over the town as if to see the end of it all; when in the cars of the brutalized and drunken revellers, there arose the sound of the clanking of the British cavalry.

In the midst of the sin and the smoke, and the din, came Roland, riding calmly, with sixty young Englishmen behind him, and twenty good Sikhs behind them.

Roland gauged the power of the Indian mutiny from this moment. He saw they had no leader. He had conceived that it was death to come here. So it would have been, had there been one solitary Orsini among them. In the midst of all their amorphous fury and wickedness, the sight of the old scarlet, gold and red, was enough to paralyze them. A more desperate deed of valour than Roland's was seldom done. He had eighty men,

and he rode deliberately into the midst of two thousand infuriated mercenary mutineers, and not one man of them dared show his musket.

“Don’t stop,” said Morton, eagerly. “We shall get out of this without bloodshed. Who would have thought it !”

“I think I will stop once,” said Roland. “The fellows should not miss their lesson.”

“I beg you not, Evans. I beg and pray you not. I urged you to come here to-night because I thought that the end would be death. I never dreamt, with all my experience, that the day would be so demoralized. Man, man, at this very moment you are half way between heaven and hell. Heaven ! look at that. I thought they would not let us go. Charge at the gallop, man !”

“We shall do it very well at the trot,” said Roland. “It is only a rallying square, and the men are not loaded—they are only loading now.” *

* The unutterable imbecility of the *beginning* of the Indian mutiny is almost incredible. The defence of Delhi had elements of splendour about it. The Indians have a curious word for international law—the word is “dacoiv-

They trotted steadily up to the square, and as Roland said, the men were not loaded. But these few fought and fought well, but were ridden down. Morton's horse was killed under him by a bayonet thrust, but Morton himself was uninjured, and hung on to Roland's right stirrup while Roland cut at the bayonets with his sword. The few men who had formed the rallying square had done their work however, and dispersed.

The troop were trotting, and the men were thrown into confusion by this very slight opposition. The Sikhs got mixed with the Europeans, and though perfectly brave, were very glad to get out of a dangerous embroglio.

"Well," said Roland, when they were opposite the patch of jungle where Jim's moonshee was killed, "who ever would have believed that? I never thought to have got out of that alive. I say, Jim, Where is Jim Mordaunt? Jim! Jim!"

He might have Jim-Jimmed till he was tee." A friend of mine (in the Hanwell Asylum, but very clever) translates the word as "The devil take the hindmost."

hoarse. The troop were all right, the Sikhs were all right; but there was no Jim.

And between Roland and Jim had arisen suddenly a barricade of half-burned rafters, with two thousand men behind it, impassable for cavalry. And the Rajah, in green, gold, and white, stood at the top of it for a moment, and saluted Roland courteously.

But Roland Evans was on one side of the barricade and Ethel's brother Jim was on the other.

CHAPTER XVII.

“WELL done, Evans !” cried Claverhouse, running up. “Splendidly done, sir. The very thing to have done under any circumstances. You are a hero !”

“The idea was not mine, and it has been carried out so ill that I have lost my right arm. I have lost James Mordaunt.”

There was dead silence. No one knew what to say. It was a supreme time.

“This is a very sad mishap. Can we do anything ?”

“Dare you attack the lines with the infantry ?” asked Roland.

Claverhouse said emphatically, “No !” and Morton said emphatically “No !”

“Then,” said Roland, “I suppose we had better move back on the palace, and prepare for defence.” So they formed the infantry,

and Eddy and the Nawab were quietly told of what had happened. Neither of them said one word.

Nothing further occurred worthy of remark that night; but when the Europeans were collected in the palace and were counted, 34 were missing, men, women, and children all told, and among them were James Mordaunt and Allan Evans.

The great outer gates were shut, and so began the siege of Belpore, now, with a dozen others, a matter of history. Our very first duty, however, is to follow James Mordaunt, who is in harder case than any of the others.

He had been looking quite carelessly, amused by the whole scene of the sulky rebels, when suddenly he saw a European face beside him, and saw that it was Allan Evans.

Jim was now only parallel with the advanced four of the Sikhs, and at a trot the slightest halt throws one behind. "Take my stirrup leather, Gray," he whispered to Allan, pausing for an instant. "Not like that, man; behind my knee, not before, so! I will get you out of

the mess you have got us all into. Run, man, and never leave go of me."

"Run as quick as you can," whispered Jim. "We must catch up the Sikhs. By golly, we are too late. Good-bye, Allan Gray. All is forgiven between us, but hold on like grim death, old boy. I won't leave you."

The Sepoys were between them and the Sikhs fifty deep, with bayonets in their hands. Jim, crying out once more, "Hold on, old boy, and let us go at them," put spurs to his horse, and Allan, quite unused to such rough play, let go and was swept down in the rush against them. Jim saw what had happened, and, after a glance behind, felt that he could do no more for poor Allan.

"So this is death," he said. "But they will be very sorry at Stretton for a time," and he rode straight and hard at the crowd before him.

His maddened horse, a furious young Romeo Australian colt, took him fairly and bravely into the *mélée*. Bayonet squares have been broken certainly once or twice; notably at Herat the year before this; but in two seconds

poor Jim's horse was dead with bayonet thrusts, never to see the long grey plains of Australia any more, and poor Jim was down, overpowered, but quite unwounded, never apparently to see the long brown sheets of heather on Longmynd any more.

His arms were tightly bound behind his back, and he had fought with such terrible ferocity that it was some time before he got breath to speak. When he had regained it, he saw a havildar before him, and he said "Havildar, have my poor horse buried."

The havildar only bowed his head, but Jim saw that it would be done. And catching the havildar's eye for an infinitesimal part of a second, from that moment he began to think that there were certain men in the mutiny who were not there of their own accord. In another minute he was led bound before the Rajah.

Jim began the conversation instantly. "I beg, sir, that our interview may be private. I have something very particular to say to you. See, I am bound hand and foot, and I know that I must die. I am not going to upbraid or

insult you in any way, as I have done before. Your revenge is perfectly complete. I submit. I only ask one favour as a dying man."

"If you can tell me how, in asking it, I can make your end more bitter, you will do me such a favour, that I will have you shot, instead of burning you alive," said the Rajah.

"What is the good of talking tiger like that?" said Jim. "You would not go as far as that. I know I must die, and if you burn me (which will be a very bad precedent) I pray that I may be burnt without being stripped. Will you grant that?"

The Rajah, curling his moustache, said, after nearly a minute, "Yes."

"And if you shoot me, which, as a gentleman, you ought to do, you know, I hope that you will bury me at once, just as I stand."

The Rajah demurred at this, and began to ask why.

"Because I have letters on me; letters which will make wrath with people who have never offended you."

"Let me see them," said the Rajah.

“Dare you come near a bound and disarmed man?” said James. “If so, come and open my tunic, and look at them. You can read English enough to know that they are not political; but only compromise a woman. The mere post-marks will show you that.”

The Rajah undid Jim’s tunic, and then his shirt, disclosing his brave white breast. Round his neck hung a slight chain, and on it were two letters, the first post-mark of which was “Church Stretton.”

He put them back again. I cannot say that I know enough of the Indian mind to say why he did so; but he looked at Jim differently from before. He looked at him steadily for a few moments, and then Jim said—

“If I pledge you my word of honour that those letters only compromise a woman you never heard of, will you let them die with me?”

“Yes,” said the Rajah; “you people of proper forms of civilization have not learnt the great art of lying yet. Some are getting to understand its value. Yes, I will believe you.”

“And you will have me shot, old fellow, won’t you? Don’t burn me. It is so exceedingly nasty.”

“You shall be shot, assuredly,” said the Rajah. And Jim said—

“Thankee. You are a better fellow than I took you for. I say——”

The Rajah turned.

“Allan Evans, whom you have in your hands, I want to speak about him. Don’t hurt him—he is mad. I say, sir, every nation spares mad people.”

“I will not hurt a hair of his head,” said the Rajah.

“I say, Rajah,” bawled Jim, “when am I to be worked off?”

“To-morrow morning,” said the Rajah, waving his hand. “I have no priest for you. Stay, is not Allan a priest?”

“Yes, he will do,” said Jim. “Send him to me. Good-bye!” And the Rajah was gone. And Jim was put on horseback, and led off, and found himself soon in a dungeon of the Rajah’s palace, thinking of his mother entirely now, and not of Mildred, and wonder-

ing very much whether the Doctor would be sorry, and thinking very deeply of all that he had heard in lecture about the necessity of Communion for sinners, and wishing very deeply that he could communicate now. We must leave our Jim in ill case, only to find him in worse.

The Rajah walked away with the havildar who had looked on Jim. And the Rajah said to the havildar, who was one of his nearly innumerable brothers, but the favourite, "I hope we shall not make a bad business of this. Why did not the men close on those cavalry to-night?"

"Because they were afraid."

"Why were they afraid?"

"Because their officers were not with them."

"Did you give the word of command?"

"Yes, and was laughed at in the face of the conquerors of India."

"Why will they not follow native officers as well as these cursed English?"

"Because we have no native officers who are capable of handling even a battalion with decency. Instruct native officers in the Euro-

pean tactics required for moving large bodies of men, and India would be lost to them in two years."

"I wish they would do it," said the Rajah.

"They are not such fools," said the havildar.

"Suppose we make a mess of it, after all?" said the Rajah.

"We certainly shall do so," said the havildar. "I told you so from the first."

"But we are safe in the rear," said the Rajah.

"With Lawrence, and 80,000 to 180,000 Sikhs ready for a burst on Bengal. Oh, yes, doubtless."

"They will not fight for them," said the Rajah.

"They held pretty close to them to-night," said the havildar.

"What would you do?" said the Rajah.

"Blow my brains out with a pistol," said the havildar.

"I suppose it will come to that; but I will have the lives of the Nawab and those English first. If the worst comes to the worst, you

and I can get northward, into Nepal, with the jewels. On our own bodies we can easily carry forty lacs. The sapphire and the emerald are worth forty lacs."

"But where is the market?" said the havildar.

"Oh, with the Russians," said the Rajah. "They will buy *anything*. Alexandrofski would give double its price for the emerald, if he could only have the pleasure of saying at St. Petersburg that it had been bought from a Rajah, a rebel against the English, who had sent it through the hostile territory of Bokhara; which, by the way, I don't mean to do, because, if he buys it, he must send the money for it, and take it away on his own responsibility. I am not going to trust my jewels with either Khan or Ameer. You and I have a strong share of Mogul blood in us, you know, and that is what makes us such thundering thieves."

"What shall we do to-morrow morning, your highness?" said the havildar.

"I thought you said we were to blow our brains out."

“ I have altered my opinion.”

“ Well, then, if I might hazard a remark,
I should say, attack the Nawab at day-dawn.
I am sick of affairs, and shall go to bed.
I doubt we have made a mess of it.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

HE most certainly had.

I must explain once more that the Nawab's palace was built on the farther side of a tall rock, overgrown with creepers and tropical vegetation, entirely obscured from the Rajah's palace, but communicating in every direction with the great caves of Belpore, forgotten by all but moonshees. There was, if you remember, one opening out of these caves towards the palace of the Rajah, the one which Roland had seen with the Nawab. The Rajah knew that the rock dominated his palace, but with that sleepy stupidity and ignorance of tactics which beat the mutineers, he had cared nothing for it.

He approached his palace at the head of a long cavalcade of torch-bearers, well watched, though he little dreamt it. As the blazing

procession neared the palace gate, there was a flash and a report about six hundred yards away, and looking up, a moving circle of light was seen to pause in the sky over-head, the corona round some saint's head, and then to drop rapidly on to the very roof of his palace. He had scarcely time to scream out an oath, when there was the roar of an explosion inside, mixed with the crash of broken glass, and the yells of wounded or terrified servants. They were shelling his palace from the temples of Belpore. From the sacred strongholds of the gods which he had worshipped so truly and so well, they were destroying the home of his delights, and the gods themselves sat, with their hands upon their knees, looking down upon the beauty and fury of Roland, and spake not one word, though he cried aloud to them, and cursed them and flattered them alternately.

One more shell, then another before day-dawn; they had guessed the angle well in the bright moon, and a hundred English hands were hard at work making new embrasures, which would be through the rock by morning. He could hear a blast go as he sat there dumb-

founded. His palace was ruined. From this moment pity left the man's heart. From that moment he was a madman. He knew that in a few hours his palace would for the most part be untenable, unless he could storm the Nawab. He determined to begin the counter-siege the very next day.

They were not very long in their preparations. It would seem that they must win. There was nothing between two thousand good Indian soldiers with ten guns, and the British garrison, with the assistance of four hundred and fifty faithful native men, but the old high wall of the Nawab's palace. Even with eighteen-pounders they could make a breach in that, for there was not a gun mounted on it; they were fools, these English. They might shell our palace, but we would batter theirs.

Some said that there were earth-works inside the wall, which would have to be carried afterwards. There was a council of war over this matter, which came roughly to this. Who had seen them? Nobody of any consequence, it would seem. It now turned out that not one soul, as far as could be ascertained, of the

general population, had been admitted within the back-gates for above six months. Certain Nautch-girls deposed and made oath, that a certain Jew, their impressario, had told them, when in good humour, that there was an earth-work inside there as big as the railway embankment at Belasapore. But their words seemed as idle tales. And even if there were?

They skirmished up to the old wall and tempted the besieged. Result, the silence of death in a lone place. The silence of the Australian desert round the dying solitary Wills was not deeper than the silence about that deep-arched teak-gate, when the bugle sounded the two long-drawn breves "Cease firing."

It was ghastly. There was some devilish scheme in the minds of these English—*they* had ceased firing till then. But now once more, bang; crash the well-elevated mortars went on hurling the live vertical shells into that unutterable abomination, the palace of all delights of the Rajah; and it stands a draught-house to this day, with the cobra basking where the Nautch-girl had slept.

They maddened once more at the sound,

and brought up their guns, mostly eighteen-pounders as it happened, and concentrated them on the gate. The roar and din of their own guns prevented them from hearing the other party firing, and when the gate was destroyed, after three hours, and they heard the guns of the besieged going still, they took heart, and fancied they dare not face them here, but would make their stand in an inner court.

There was a sudden, furious, and tumultuous rush through the gate-way, their folly in attacking which ruined them more effectually than they would have been ruined otherwise. They poured in pell-mell and broke to 'right and left against an inner line of gabions and fascines, eight feet high, and perpendicular.

A few in the front saw what had happened, and cried out that they must retreat. The crowd of disorganized Sepoys poured in still, a scarlet flood, through the black arch, spreading themselves right and left, and filling the space between the old wall and the earthworks. Native officers began to make it understood that they were in a trap, but it was utterly too late. Some few in the front, in sheer desperation,

tried to get up the earthwork before them—did so, and fell dead by well-directed revolver-shots.

On this little space, between the two lines, Roland and the Nawab had trained five nine-pounders in embrasure. It had been done some time now, but the Nawab had managed so well that no one had known it. At the very height of all the confusion Eddy stood on the top of the battery, and looking down on the struggling mass of men, the front of whom saw the danger, and the rear of which kept pushing on, and cast his shako down amongst them, crying out, “Now, gentlemen, if you are ready, we are going to begin.”

Of the ghastly slaughter which followed it would be ill to speak. The guns immediately in front of the mutineers were loaded with nails and fragments of horse-shoes, made handily into cartridges and served rapidly. Those two which enfiladed the crowded mass of men were served with grape, and crossed fire with the others. Existence became impossible, and retreat nearly so; for forty picked marksmen with Enfields (dear old arm! how well we have loved thee), shattered in on the confused

crowd thronging the gateway in the almost hopeless effort to escape.

It was a ghastly business. Above fifty were smothered, as people are smothered in the rush out of a burning theatre, in their attempt to escape by the gate. Three hundred others lay about ; two hundred and eighty dead in the narrow space between them and the old wall. About eighty were groaning and screaming horribly. A rapid council of war was held.

Claverhouse said, " In God's name, Roland, let the men fire on them, and put them out of their misery."

Roland said, " The men would not do it, mad as they are. I could not stand *that*. It would not do to tell in Europe."

" Well, it is not *La Guerre*," said Claverhouse, " but what *can* we do ? "

Eddy had taken a man's ramrod, and carefully tied a white pocket handkerchief on to it. He now waved it about between Roland and Claverhouse.

" The boy is right," said Claverhouse ; " but who is to carry it among these treacherous devils ? "

“Why I, of course,” said Eddy.

“Dare you?” said Claverhouse.

“Dare I?” said Eddy. “Come, you shall give no word of command. Ensign Evans absent without leave. That is *your* report to the Horse Guards. It is all right, I tell you.”

Without waiting for another word, Eddy slipped down the bastion, and ran towards the now deserted gate.

They watched him go, a bright, pretty figure; blue, gold, and in white trousers, with his sword girt close up at his side; bare-headed, for he had thrown away his shako. He stepped lightly over dying and dead, and passed fearlessly out of the black gateway into the sunlight beyond for the *first* time.

“He is fearfully incautious,” said Roland, emphatically.

“He is all right,” said Claverhouse; “they won’t harm *him*.”

It would seem as if Claverhouse was right. Eddy returned in a few minutes, with the Rajah beside him, followed by a crowd of unarmed natives, who began to remove not only the wounded, but the dead. The Rajah had also

an improvised white flag, a puggery tied on a cane covered with beads, and they stood as representatives while the work went on.

Eddy bowed and scraped, with the pocket handkerchief on his ramrod. The Rajah salaamed, and was very polite. Claverhouse and Roland watched him.

He counted the dead and the wounded until the very last of the wounded; then, as this man was being carried out, he spoke a few words to Eddy, and Eddy followed him to the gate. The Rajah uncovered the face of the dying man, and looked at it; and in the next instant a dozen men had overpowered Eddy, and carried him, struggling, out into the sunlight, beyond the gate for the *second* time.

There was no time to *think* even. Eddy was gone, and gone behind eight hundred ranged muskets. Double fortifications may tell in two ways.

CHAPTER XIX.

STRETTON was not the less beautiful and quiet, however, than heretofore. Not the less quiet, until one week when two catastrophes came together. Monday morning and Saturday night were between them, but the Mordaunts and Evanses always speak of them now as happening on the same day.

While the Nawab and Roland were shelling the Rajah's palace, and while the Rajah was doing the best he could, certain things had happened in Shropshire worthy of remark.

The Dean had proposed to Aunt Eleanor, on the grounds that they were very fond of one another, and that if they did not marry now they would soon be too old. And I regret to say that Aunt Eleanor returned for answer that "she had seen enough of that kind of thing, and was not going to make a fool of herself at her time of life."

After this Ethel had a very hard time of it with her. Of course she could not know what had happened; but even Deacon Maedingaway told her, in confidence, that she had been to him about some geranium cuttings, and that she had so sniffed and squiffed at him that he was certain something had gone wrong between her and the Dean.

Sunday morning, however, they all went to church to hear the Dean preach, even Deacon Maedingaway. "For it got about that the native troops in Bengal were up and murdering their officers. And the Dean preached on it, and preached well. He thought, in conclusion, that it was the duty of every person capable of thinking, to consider whether or no we had done our duty by India. That it was our duty to pray for the widows and orphans of British officers and soldiers, and so on. A sermon of good common-places, excellent in their way. In the *end* of his sermon the man broke out, and he left some of his congregation sobbing.

"In the very depth of the darkness of this furious embroglio, the extent of which no man

can measure, the end of which no man can see, I, who preach to you, have three boys, more deeply dear to me than my own life. They were committed to me by a man I respect and reverence beyond most men, and I did my best by them. Clever, petulant, furious, fantastic, you know them; you can all say that of them. Innocent, kindly, brave; you can all say *that* of them. The dark cloud which has been hanging over India for so long has settled down now, and in the deepest, blackest night of it are Roland and Edward Evans and James Mordaunt.

“There is a dark night of deep, dim darkness which is coming in this land. A night in which a man shall feel for his fellow, and say, ‘Where is he?’ Our boys are in the midnight of it. I cannot ask you to pray for their souls, but I ask you to pray that their hands may be strengthened, and that they may die so that the heathen may say, ‘Behold how these Christians love one another!’”

There are landowners and landowners. For centuries these Evanses and Mordaunts had been living among their people and doing their

duty. One house was Whig and the other Tory; but they had minded the poor and done their duty by the land so long that the very cadets of the two houses were to them as their own flesh and blood. I express no opinions, but facts. It *was* so, and what is more, for good or for evil, it *is* so. You must make the best of it.

I never in my life heard any expression of opinion in an English church. There was one on this occasion in the churchyard, however. The Dean was mobbed for information. He had none. There were the great facts—that the Bengal sepoy had risen, and that the garrison of India consisted of two cavalry and eighteen infantry regiments of Europeans, among a population of 180,000,000, and that these three boys, Roland, Jim, and Eddy were in the thickest of the whole business.

It would have been ill for the Rajah had he been in the quiet English churchyard that evening, among the graves of the men of Trafalgar and Waterloo, of Seringapatam, Laswaree, and Sobraon. Give a people a history, O statesmen, and they are unconquerable for

three generations. A "cry" is what one wants to keep a nation alive. As a political cry, "Reform" means just nothing. As a war cry, "Eylau," "Waterloo," or "Island No. 10," mean less. Yet many things have been put through by the power of those cries.

We put through the Indian mutiny with no definite cry at all. It was amorphous, hideous, fantastic; not reducible to words. The poor folks in the Shropshire churchyard only swarmed after the Rector, and, getting what information they could, waved their hands wildly, and wished they had been there. For not only Roland, and Eddy, and Jim were there; but Bill, and Tom, and Harry, and the young man, whose name was disputed, who had married Stokes's girl Jane, and left her in the family-way.

But the Rajah of Bethoor did not know of all this. He had got Jim, and Eddy, and his jewels, and in addition, a most tremendous licking. But the Rector and Aunt Eleanor could not know of this.

They separated from the villagers as soon as they could. Ethel and John Mordaunt were

following them, but Aunt Eleanor turned to them and said—

“Go home, you two.”

She said nothing but that; but they went.

When they were alone, she said—

“Why don’t you put your whole heart into your sermon? You are as bald as can possibly be for twenty minutes, and then you burst out and speak like a man.”

“One must spin it out in these country places,” said the Dean (Rector).

“I don’t see that,” said Aunt Eleanor. “I hope, however, talking of spinning things out, that you have duly considered the foolish nonsense you spoke to me last week.”

“Why?”

“Because if you were to repeat it, you would have a different answer.”

“Eleanor, will you have me?”

“Yes, my beloved; my only hope; so dearly loved, and truly, for so many years. We have lost most of our lives, dear, yet some remains. Take me to thee, good kind heart, and we will weep for Eddy together. Oh, my darling Eddy! oh, my pretty boy! I have none left but you

now, dear. Don't leave a poor old woman like me."

So, after so many years, these two hearty souls drew together over what they thought was the grave of a boy they had both loved well.

CHAPTER XX.

AUNT ELEANOR, I fear, lay awake weeping the most of that night. She was like the—

“Old yew that graspeth at the stones
That name the underlying dead;”

the fibres of her heart were coarse, but they were very strong, and they had wrapped themselves round Eddy as they had never wrapped themselves about any one before, and she must entirely believe that Eddy was dead. She called herself an old fool, but that was not much good; and on the Monday morning something occurred so very terrible that she scarcely thought, more than eight hours a day, of Eddy at all.

Mildred Maynard had been confined, and her mother-in-law had been very tender with her, and had nursed her well. Not one word had been said for weeks about the old letters

of poor Jim, or about Jasper Meredith. Her schemes were quite in abeyance, but ready for new motion. But if the girl, in the terror of her first confinement, was glad to receive the attentions of Mrs. Maynard, it was most undoubted that when she had nearly recovered, and had her baby by her side, those attentions got more and more repugnant day by day.

They grew at last perfectly unbearable. Mrs. Maynard's very way of coming in and out of the room was perfectly unbearable to Mildred. Women have some very strange instincts. I know a man, a hard-working man, a very good man, a man whom *I* do not mind: and I know also three refined ladies who hate his presence in the room where they are. And I do not know why, and never *shall* know. Mildred's instincts against Mrs. Maynard had been pretty strong before her boy was born, but then she had been a silly puling coward. Since this young gentleman had begun to study the great arts of kicking and yelling, Mrs. Maynard the younger was quite a different person, to Mrs. Maynard the elder's great astonishment.

Mrs. Maynard the elder had felt the storgè herself, but like a fool as she was, had never calculated upon its appearing in her daughter-in-law. She was very fond of fowls, and would kick a *laying* hen any day, but was too wise, wearing dainty silk stockings, to kick a hen with chickens. She knew from experience that she would be pecked. She never had brains enough to think that Mildred Evans, the sister of Roland and Edward, worth ten of her, would dare to peck her now she had a boy: she all the time having those letters in her possession. She never thought of that.

Mildred lay and thought of it in her bed, however, with her baby beside her. She of course would have liked to consult Aunt Eleanor, but Eleanor, dearly as she loved her, was a terror to her. She had come to see her once or twice, and the only effect which it had on her nerves was the same as if a barrel of gunpowder was in the room and Aunt Eleanor was sitting on it smoking a short pipe, her hatred for Mrs. Maynard was so great. Ethel of course could not be consulted, and so Mildred, like a true and worthy Evans, thought

out the matter for herself and consulted her baby: who apparently agreed.

Her husband, good old Maynard of the four-oar, used to come and sit with her many times a day. And he was very kind, and good, and gentle, and most enormously delighted with her baby; and one day, when he and Mildred were playing with the baby, she got the baby to sleep between them and said, "Husband dear, lay your head on the pillow beside me. I am going to speak in whispers to you."

"Why so?" said Maynard.

"Because your mother is listening at the door," she said, with a smile.

Maynard walked swiftly to the door, and Mrs. Maynard was not nimble enough to get away before he saw her. Even bulls get ill-tempered at times, and he said—

"Mother, mind your own business."

He was still cross when he went back to his wife, but she positively refused to speak to him while he had a cloud between his eyebrows. His brow was soon clear, and she began.

"Dear husband, I have to talk to you about one thing very particularly. Jim Mordaunt,

dear, good, innocent Jim Mordaunt, loved me better than a brother loves his sister, and he has behaved so well about it."

"Yes, I knew he loved you," said her husband, in a whisper. "I have had deep grief over it, wife."

"What need? Except that I was a silly coward and your mother was wicked, what need? We were brought up boy and girl together, and I thought he loved me only as a sister: but I found it was otherwise, and he went."

"But Jim must have been untrue to me for you to find it out, my love, my darling."

"Never!—never for one instant by look or word. James Mordaunt is a gentleman, and he loves you."

"But do you love him, wife?" said Mordaunt.

"Love him! Love poor wild Jim! Of course I do. Is there any one who knows his true worth who does not? If my tongue refused to say that I loved Jim, I hope it may drop out of my head. But not as I do you. There is no one like you in the whole world, dear."

“ God bless you, sweetheart,” said Maynard.

“ Now,” said Mildred, “ Jim has written to me three times, and I have replied to him three times. I have concealed this fact from you, not because I distrusted your noble nature, but because since we were married I have been nervous and hysterical. I am so no longer. This little fellow has cured me of nervousness ; and a wife who could not trust a man like you may drown herself in the Severn for me. I cannot show you my letters to poor Jim ; you must trust me for them. But with regard to Jim’s letters to me I require you to read them.”

“ Why should I ? ”

“ To prove how innocent he is.”

“ I do not care to read them,” said Maynard.

“ Ay, but I insist that you should,” she replied.

“ Where are they ? ”

“ Your mother has got them. She has taken them from me, and during my nervous time has been holding them over me in terror. —Don’t swear, dear—don’t swear. Be quiet

with her and request her to show them to you. I will give you from memory, if you care, my letters to Jim. I have told him I loved him, you know, and so do you. Go to your mother, and fetch those letters."

He left her with a kiss. He was not very long gone: and he came back with the letters in his hand. The whole trouble was over and done now, and the verdict pronounced.

"Poor old Jim!"

There was peace and entire reconciliation. Till they be under the grass together there will be no difference between those two any more.

What passed between Maynard and his mother no man knows exactly. He told Roland that he gently and kindly asked her for those letters of Jim's, and that she at once gave them to him. And then he says that she began to gibber and fume at him, as he thought, angrily. That is all he knows. The Dean is of opinion that she was trying to say something to him, but that her tongue refused its office. Whether it was anger, scorn, or forgiveness none can say, for he had scarcely been with his wife and baby again five minutes,

laughing over poor Jim's letters, when a scared maid came in, and called him out. "His mother was ill," she said. She was not only ill, but dead.

Now, it so happened that at this very time Aunt Eleanor was determined to go over and face "that woman," and on the Monday morning Ethel came to her and said,—

"Miss Evans, you are not going to the Barton to-day?"

"Of course I am, child. I am going to have it out with that woman. She is making mischief between husband and wife; and if the husband was a chimney-sweep and the wife a ballet-dancer, any one who made mischief between them ought to be hung, and I am going over to tell her that *she* ought to be hung."

"My dear Miss Evans, one moment," said Ethel, kneeling down, "you must *not* go."

"Why not? That woman, indeed! Why not?"

"Because she is dead," said Ethel.

"What did she die of?" said Aunt Eleanor, puzzled and scared.

"I don't know," said Ethel.

“I don’t believe that the woman knows herself what she *did* die of,” said Aunt Eleanor. “If she did, she would say it was something else.”

“But she is dead, Miss Evans.”

“Fiddle-de-dee,” said Aunt Eleanor. “You take my cob. He will let you open the gates, you know, and ride across the country to Shrewsbury, and get Watson. The woman is in a fit. I will go over and nurse her.”

But, in spite of all Aunt Eleanor’s unbelief, Ethel succeeded in showing her that Mrs. Maynard, of Maynard’s Barton, was dead. And Miss Evans walked up and down the room, rubbing her nose.

Not for long. She sat down and began to cry.

“She was a very good woman, my dear,” she said to Ethel, through her tears. “I should have liked to have given her a piece of my mind before she went, but it is too late now. I know that she said I was a grumpy old toad—Myrtle and Gray told me that. But it is all forgiven *now*. Think of the things I have said of her, my dear.”

And, indeed, they were many ; and the week went on.

She talked every day to the Dean, her old lover, soon to be her husband. She talked very pleasantly. "Sir, we are too old to be married. They will laugh at us. But I love you, my dear, very much indeed, in spite of your wig, which must have grey let into it till it matches my hair. Grey as I am, I am not going to the altar with a man in a chestnut wig. Have you any objections to Eddy as our son and heir? If he comes home—if he comes home."

"The boy will come home right enough," said the Dean, "and he shall be our son and heir."

And so the week went on. Mrs. Maynard was buried on Saturday, and the Dean read the service. *That* was over. And he came over to tea with Miss Evans and Ethel at the Grange, and on the table lay a newspaper—the *Shropshire Chronicle*.

They had no daily newspaper. The *Shropshire Chronicle* gave them their latest news, and all three tried to get hold of it, but the Dean got it, and read it. He turned ghastly pale, and looked at the two women.

“Eleanor,” he said, “sit there ; and Ethel, you sit there, and do not move one inch.”

“Is there disaster ?” said Ethel.

“Yes,” said the Dean. “Sit still, and listen, without cries and without tears. O Lord, if I were there !” and he began to read :—

“‘Belpore is utterly lost, following Delhi and Meerut. A young moonshee has arrived at Barrackpore, who tells us that the native troops rose on the night of the 14th, and murdered most of their officers, and many of the English ladies. The rest of our fellow-countrymen, including the judge, collector, assistant-magistrate, about 160 European troops, with such of the women and children not brutally murdered, have taken refuge in the Palace of the Nawab of Belpore. He spells badly the names of the officers actually murdered in the first onslaught, but we make them to be Rossiter, Street, Murray, Jones, and Towsey. An attack on the native lines was made that evening by Captain Claverhouse and Lieutenant Evans, which seemed to have been perfectly successful.’ Ethel, sit still. Do not make my task too bitter.”

"I only crushed my hands together."

"Listen, and be quiet," said the Dean.

" 'We regret to say, however, that in this demonstration on the native line Cornet Mor-daunt got separated from his troop, and was cut to pieces.' "

Ethel rose with a wild moan which would have broken your heart, but the Dean was before her, with his hands spread out, as though he were going to mesmerize her.

"Ethel ! Ethel ! I want every nerve in your body. There is a grief greater than yours. Sit down." And she sat down, rocking herself to and fro, and saying, "Jim ! Jim ! Jim !"

"Now go on," said Aunt Eleanor, "and let us have it over. How did my boy die ? That is what I want to know."

The Dean read out from the paper. " ' An attack was made in the morning on the Palace of the Nawab. It was repulsed with triumphant success. But we are sorry to say that Ensign Evans, another of our bonny Shropshire boys, coxswain of the Shropshire crew, who beat the London Rowing Club, was seized by the Rajah

of Bethoor and murdered while he was carrying a flag of truce to make arrangements for the rebel wounded.' "

"If that is true, as no doubt it is," said Aunt Eleanor, sharply, "it is just as I wished it. I knew my boy would die game. Just read out that passage again, will you, my good soul?"

He did so.

"Carried a flag of truce to remove the rebel wounded. Yes, just like him. Now if Ethel and you will go and behowl yourselves, I will do it alone. Go."

CHAPTER XXI.

At Belpore men were mad, as men are in revolutions. As mad as they were when they shot my hero, the Archbishop of Paris, on the barricades. If St. Paul himself had stood between the British and the Rajah's people, St. Paul would have been shot down.

Little brown youths, nearly naked, lest any trace of Europeanism should be found about them, were sent out as scouts and spies, to find some intelligence of Jim, Eddy, and Allan. Not one was unfaithful, for they were relations of the Nawab ; but only one came back.

He reported that he could find out nothing more than this : Jim and Eddy were both alive, and Allan was apparently at liberty, though not allowed to join the European garrison. *Jim* was in the Rajah's dungeon ; there was no doubt about *that*. Where Eddy was he could not in any way tell.

Roland, the Nawab, and Claverhouse cross-questioned him on this subject, but the young man stuck to his text. He was perfectly and absolutely certain that Eddy was not killed. They had to be contented with it. They gave this young man ghee, rice, fresh-killed chicken, and all kinds of nasty things, in which his soul delighted.

Meanwhile, the Nawab had a job in hand to which he took more kindly than the making of kites on the Franklin plan, kites with a wire in the string. He had flown those kites several times in dangerous weather, and neglecting the necessity of communication with the earth, had twice been knocked head over heels ; which will ultimately be the fate of Pepper with his mammoth Saxton battery. His new employment was making embrasures in a rock, and dropping live shells on to the top of his beloved Rajah's palace.

He was intensely delighted with this amusement. His French wife said that he had acquired a *nouvelle jeunesse* since he had taken to this amusement. She brought her work down into the cave, and superintended.

When they let off one of their mortars, she said "Piff," and putting down her work, looked where it dropped, and would occasionally say "Bon !" but only occasionally ; you must remember that her nation had burnt more gunpowder than any nation in the world ever did. And moreover, when the Americans talk about *their* war being the most tremendous ever seen on the face of the earth, they are talking terrible balderdash ; which, however, is no business of mine.

Madame Nawab brought her work down into the caves and superintended. Her father had been an officer of artillery.

Roland came upon her with her eye to the sight of a newly-trained mortar, and her needle-work in her hand. "Crac flan," said Madame. "Fire hims off, Roland. Crève-cœur, make to tell them to fire hims off. We shall now see explosions in his palace."

Bang went the gun, and certainly the French lady was right. In the confused mass of buildings there was a sudden light, and the roar of the explosion reached them half a minute afterwards.

“Why did you call me Crève-cœur, Madame?” asked Roland.

“Broke heart. Why did I call you so? If you have heart, is it not broke? She you love be gone for all, lost for ever, for you shall never see her no more. Her brother lost and left for torture, you shall never see him no more; and your own brother Edie gone to torture, him whom you was to love so well. Ask me why I call you Crève-cœur!”

“Madame,” said Roland, “you cannot possibly conceive that I do not feel the dreadful position of my dearest friends.”

“That is what I say,” said Madame. “You have heart enough to have it broken. Next to the French there are none like the English. But you suppress your fury; we demonstrate it, as *you* know.”

And Madame went on with her needlework, looking out from time to time to see if the shells dropped well.

And Roland went for a walk round to look at things, and the result of his thoughts was—

“Fancy there being only eighteen miles of salt water between the two nations, and not

one thought in common. Even in sentiment, for which her nation is so famous, she misses her point with me, a typical Englishman. We must go beyond France for our true allies. I would that the good God had sent me Hans and Gottfried here. It is all very well to argue and jaw, but if any man doubts that the next row-royal will not be between the Teutonics (with the Slavonics) against the Latins (with some of the Celts), he had better take his needlework down and sit beside Madame."

That is what Roland thought. I am never answerable for my characters.

CHAPTER XXII.

JIM was an affectionate fellow, who could love more than most men ; but, on the other hand, he never throughout his life got on ten minutes without an enemy. He never had more than one enemy at a time certainly, but that enemy was, for that time, an enemy with a vengeance. His enemy just now was the Rajah ; and the Rajah was perfectly aware of the fact, and kept away from him. He did not know exactly what that young man might do. He had all the intelligence of an Asiatic.

Jim was tightly ironed, hand and foot, with a kind of iron or "darby," introduced into the station by his friend the assistant-magistrate, and at once adopted by the Rajah. He was in utter and complete darkness, and knew that he could only see the light to die. So he said his prayers four times over ; and every time he

thought of Mildred, he prayed to God to forgive him. And at last he never thought of her at all.

How time went in this utter darkness he could not make out. He got hungry, and reached about in the darkness to find food, and he found rice, ghee, and water, and when he had eaten he fell asleep and dreamt of the old four-oar, and the Greek prose lecture, and the Dean, and the Doctor, indiscriminately.

He awoke, and he lay awake in the darkness for a long time. The boy's faith was simple and pure—not a bad one to face death with. The Doctor was to him the incarnation of human wisdom, and the Doctor had always impressed on them, that those who believed in the great sacrifice, and repented them truly of their sins, and *were in charity with all men*, would be after death received into and educated for higher things than they could possibly be educated for here. Consequently, this young man, having learnt logic, came to the conclusion that he must forgive the Rajah, who was going to shoot him.

And he did it. The process of mind which

he crawled through in doing it, was crab-like, wild, and fantastic beyond measure—yet he did it. His ultimate result was that when all was said and done, the Rajah had not behaved much worse to him than he had to Eddy at school in old times. That if he had been in the Rajah's place, he would have done much as the Rajah had, and that the Rajah having him shot and buried at once, with the letters upon him, and not burnt, was decidedly gentlemanly on the part of the Rajah.

So the Rajah was forgiven, and Jim was ready to die. He would have liked to communicate before death—only once—but it was not to be. That *was* a little hard to the poor lad. It was Sunday, if he could calculate, and when at this moment the boys might be kneeling at the altar-rails, and the Doctor and the second master coming solemnly round and giving them that to eat and drink, which he should eat and drink no more, save with his Father in the kingdom of Heaven. The thought of the old chapel broke the boy down. He moaned “Oro, ploro, adoro,” and felt in the hideous black night for the wall that he might turn his

face to it. The Rajah was safe enough with him now.

Through the dim arches of the great dungeon in which he lay bound there came a light, two natives bearing torches, the Rajah following them, and Allan with his hand on the Rajah's shoulder. They did not come near him, but passed on in close conversation, and the light died out again.

"By Jove," said Jim, "what a clever fellow that is. I see what he is at. He is deluding the Rajah, and keeping his life in his hand to save the British. What a fool the Rajah must be to play at chess with *him*. Eddy says he has the head of a prime minister."

Three hours before, Jim would have taken a very different view of Allan's conduct—called him thief, dog, renegade, everything that was bad. But now that he had said to his God the three great words, he only saw in the darkness the handkerchief of St. Veronica, and in front of the figure of the Doctor, in simple white surplice, preaching with uplifted hand the sermon which made them so silent. "Speak not evil one of another."

He was right. After an hour's sleep he was awakened by a candle-light upon his eyes. He looked up and saw Allan, dressed like a native Indian, all in white, who laughed at him, and said,—

“Get up, and let me undo your irons. Be quick, silent, and swift. Eddy's life depends on your doing exactly as I tell you. He risked his life once for you when you were bathing at Gloucester; if you are a man born of woman, risk yours for him now. I say nothing of the saving of your own life, for you come of a family not accustomed to fear. Now your irons are off, strip quickly and put on my clothes.”

Jim obeyed at once. “What am I to do?”

“Get down to the nullah in these clothes; I have been seen in them, and they will not know you from me. I am in the Rajah's confidence; I have turned him round my finger. Go straight down to the old moonshee's house, and you will find Eddy there, his son-in-law is protecting him. Don't try to get to the Nawab's, but try to get to the river. Brown yourselves, your moonshee's son-in-law will

show you how, and go in dhoties, as nearly bare as possible, for you may have to swim. Scarcely any of the native troops know the person of any king's officer. I have everything perfectly arranged; pray be quick."

"But you?" said Jim.

"Oh, I am perfectly comfortable. I shall sit here till you are safe, and then I shall go to him and tell him what I have done. He will be cross, I know, but he loves a joke."

"I say, old man," said Jim, standing with his trousers off, "just think twice about this job. Is there no danger in it? You are fitter to die than me, being a religious fellow, given to all kinds of good works, and I am only a worthless bullying ass. In the eternal fitness of things, if there is any danger, I ought to incur it, not you."

"I am perfectly safe," said Allan, quietly going on with his toilet. "By-the-bye, I made the acquaintance of your sister (Miss Mor-daunt) in Shropshire the other day; if you are at Stretton before me, would you kindly take a message?"

"With all pleasure."

“Tell her that I did the very best I could for *her*, and tell her to tell Miss Evans that I did the best I possibly could for Eddy. You will give that message. Go—hurry—time is very short.”

Stupid dear old Jim did not see that Allan was *dying* for him because he was Ethel's brother.

“Are you quite sure that you will not come to grief for this matter?” said he.

“Perfectly sure,” said Allan, smilingly; “the Rock of Ages was not cleft in vain. Go, hurry. This is the first time I have worn the dress you have on now. The pass-word to-night is ‘Vishnu.’ I kept a handkerchief over my face as I came, keep one over yours as you go. Go straight to the old moonshee's house, and the love which you gave there once shall be returned seven-fold.”

“You are a thundering brick,” said Jim; and he went.

No European eye ever saw Allan again. The last ever heard of him was this. Of course those who told it knew more, but being concerned in the crime, the tellers said as little as they could.

The palace of the Rajah had now been diligently shelled for two days, and was scarcely habitable. The native troops had departed for the main wasps' nest at Delhi ; the Rajah felt the ground slipping under his feet, for, like the unmistakeable hum of the earthquake before it heaves and shatters, there had come to him the news that the Sikhs were true to their salt, and he heard the tramp of 120,000 of them, heavy as the moan of distant thunder, precise and terrifying as the death-watch. The man saw his game was lost, went mad, and knew no pity.

It is perfect folly, in times of peace and security, to judge people's actions in times of danger and ferocity. Breaking the ice by cannon-shot under the feet of the camp-followers at the passage of the Beresina, seems to us now a horrible thing ; but let us not be too sure that any one of us would not have done it under the circumstance. If your soldiery are not ferocious, and determined to put the thing through, you had better cash up, and remain at peace. Ferocity is necessary in the field. Certain matters, however, which had happened

that night at Belpore cannot be called war in any way.

Hanging rebels is a very old institution. If I was a rebel and was unsuccessful, the last words I should write would be to tell my wife instantly to prosecute the Westminster Insurance Office if they hesitated for an instant to pay up. Poor Maximilian knew his chances and took them. If a revolutionist will not carry his heart in his hand, he had better stay at home.

But things were done with women and children that night at Belpore, of which there is no need to speak. If there were, one *would* speak. The Indians have learnt their lesson, and we can leave them alone until they misbehave again.

And the Rajah had been seeing to it all. And he had a *bonne bouche* left for the end. Eddy had escaped. But there was Jim.

The man never touched stimulants from one year's end to another, any more than does the goat, the ram, the bull, or the tiger. Yet for lust or ferocity he would have matched the worst man in any of our great towns.

He had the lust of blood on him to-night. Matters which shall be nameless had gone on. He must fly that very night ; and there was none left but Jim Mordaunt. The shells so diligently plied by Roland and the Nawab were shattering his palace of delight to pieces, and he must go that night. He and his brother the havildar had the jewels sewn safe, and the horses ready. There was only Jim Mordaunt.

Sitting there drinking coffee and smoking, with his brother leaning against him, came the figure of a British officer, hurriedly attired, with his tunic unbuttoned and his white breast bare. He started up, and was utterly astonished to find that it was Allan.

In Jim's clothes. "Where is Mordaunt?" asked the Rajah, "have you prepared him for death?"

"No, for life," cried Allan. "He was the brother of her I loved beyond all the world ; and I have given my life for his. He is beyond your power now. Dog, villain, pirate, hound, thief, I have given him my life. Take it. You think that you will have vengeance."

Idiot, ass, Ethel will know that I died for her brother, and that is enough for me."

One dare go no further. Some say that his body was the last thrown into the well. Some say that his body was never thrown in at all, but that he underwent a very different fate. However, no one ever saw him any more.

But that night the Rajah set fire to his palace and rode away, carrying, with the assistance of his brother, £200,000 worth of jewellery. Some say he is in Cabool, some in Nepal, but no man knows where he is. He cast the dice, and they went wrong.

The die rang sideways as it fell,
Rang sharp and keen,
Like a man's laughter heard in hell,
Far down Faustine.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE main body of the mutineers had gone to Delhi, but quite enough were left to keep our little garrison on the alert. A sortie was quite impossible, and Claverhouse and Roland gave up Jim and Eddy as lost boys.

After the burning of the Rajah's palace (which they believe to this day they did themselves), they tried a sortie or two, but it was no good whatever. The rebels had been reinforced by others, and were in a strong position on the river, between them and Delhi.

Meanwhile the Sikhs were coming, though they knew nothing of that, and Cordery had so far misrepresented matters, as to persuade the General that it would be better to put a European regiment between Delhi and the rebel regiments at Belpore. There was not the least necessity for it, but Cordery got his

way, and got leave to advance with one troop of his own regiment, four companies of the 201st, a company of native artillery, in the direction of Belpore, to see if the garrison were alive.

Of course it was very wrong of Cordery, he has been often told so. He however had such a strong feeling for our Shrewsbury boys, that he could not help it. Our fellows advanced to the river, through the jungle, and on showing themselves had fire opened on them by the rebels.

Upon which Roland and Claverhouse, now silent for a long time, sent a shell, bang, into the air, which came down, whiz, into the middle of the river, and on bursting, sent up a column of water six feet high.

“Signal + 2° to him,” said Jones, R.E. “He has his elevation too low. He will be dropping his shells among *us* directly. What a pity it is that cavalry officers should be trusted with mortars.”

The next shell went better, and dropped on the right side of the river. Still it did no harm.

The rebels were laughing at both parties. The newly arrived Europeans seemed to decline to fire, and as for the shells from the palace, if they got troublesome, they could shift. They were rather astonished, however, after an hour, by the newly arrived Europeans opening on them with a fury and ferocity which made them move with a vengeance.

Every man among the newly arrived Europeans was loading and firing at them as fast as it was possible. The guns were being served with parade rapidity; in one moment, this apparently causeless din began. In one minute they saw the cause of it, and as well as they could opened fire; but not on the European troops—on Jim and on Eddy, swimming across the river, as they had swum together at Gloucester in the old times.

The Europeans maddened. From their naked bodies they could see that the two swimmers were British, they plied their work fast and furiously; still the river was two hundred yards across, and the water was dashed into little jets of foam by the rebel bullets.

The wrath, rage, and noise of that three minutes was forgotten by none who saw it. At last, just as the two swimmers were nearing the shore, Jim sailing in Eddy's wake like a convoy, a bullet hit something else than the water, and Eddy put up his two hands and cried out, "Jim ! Jim ! I am wounded."

The bullet had gone into the boy's shoulder-blade, but Jim had his left arm round him in one instant, and swimming with his right, brought him ashore. The old bathing catastrophe was well avenged *now*.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE siege of Belpore got more and more in favour of the besieged as time went on. The flight of the Rajah was enormously in their favour. The fire upon them, slight and ineffectual as it always had been, now ceased entirely. Madame Nawab, who had seen, during her Algerian campaigns, pretty nearly as much of this sort of work as any one, announced her intention of going to church the very next Sunday but four, down past the lines, and, indeed, she accomplished that feat successfully, without the slightest danger. While troop-ship after troop-ship was crowding sail and steam from England, the back of the thing was nearly broken.

The besieged at Belpore heard, for a time, hot and fierce firing across the river, and guessed rightly that the 201st had come after

them. One glorious day, towards evening, they heard the British bugles under their walls, and knew that they were free. The rebels, finding themselves in a perfectly untenable position, had retreated. The 201st, having searched their position with shell, now cautiously crossed the river, and marched in under the old gateway, in front of the new earth-works, which had saved the Nawab's palace, Eddy and Jim leading the way.

To say what extreme extravagances were committed, would take a volume. The Nawab executed a solemn dance composed for the occasion. His wife never rebuked him at all, but sat on the top of a gabion, and stitched away. "He has the Orleans Anglo-mania," she said. "It affects some minds. For me, I am Tricoteuse. It arrives to me to knit and stitch through revolutions. Twice in Algeria, February in Paris, June in Paris, and now, once more, regard you, in India. Tiens ! perhaps I shall sit and sew in Paris when the devil comes for that dog." For Madame was of the Democratic.

The end came soon after ; there is but little

to tell of it but what you know. Enough to say that the 201st were behind Peel in the attack on Delhi, and that Roland volunteered and took part in some of the most terrible street-fighting ever seen.

But as ship-load after ship-load of the maimed came back; as ships came back not bringing wounded men, but news of dead, we began, if you remember, to calm down. It had been our greatest and most fearful disaster, and we all looked a little older and more worn.

There had scarcely been a family not in mourning over our quarrel with the Russians. But in front of these glorious Russians, who are doing well by the world, we had been loyally backed by the French; the war had been a man's war, and we had lost only men. But here we had lost women and children. Few nations have ever gone through a darker hour than the earlier part of 1858.

I hear the ringing words in my ears now, given by a pilot from a leaping whale-boat, just as the great ship was beginning to move upon her 14,000 miles' course—"They have got Delhi!"

One lived in those times. We were dull, sickened, disheartened, and captious, so we never truly roused to the American war, which was extremely lucky, for more than one half of this nation was in favour of the South. The French insulted us, and we insulted them in return, and set the volunteers in motion. But we wanted rest, and, thank God, we have had it.

CHAPTER XXV.

EIGHT months passed. Longmynd, Lawley, and Caradoc, towering up into the summer sun, and Pulverbatch Grange swept and garnished. Aunt Eleanor dressed in purple and pearl-grey, with a grand kind of lace cap, looking magnificent. No Ethel here to-day. All by herself, alone.

“Bother George Mordaunt!” she said. “Why on earth he could not let an old woman like me be married without public *spectacle* I can’t think. And the Dean is a goose about it, also. I shall look like a perfect fool beside Ethel. However, I have not submitted to have bridesmaids. *That* is a comfort. I certainly am a fool to have dressed two hours before the time. Who is that, Eliza? I can see no one.”

A maid came in and said that Sir Jasper Meredith was coming in, and what is more Sir

Jasper Meredith *came* in, with only one stick, and a large bunch of Cape jasmine in his button-hole.

“You look mighty fine, Jasper,” said Aunt Eleanor. “Do you know that I am going to be married in public this morning?”

“*I* know,” said Sir Jasper. “Do you know that *I* am going to be married in public this morning?”

“The man is out of his mind,” said Aunt Eleanor.

“Indeed, I think he is. But I have as much right to get married as——”

“Well, my dear Jasper, I will agree with you that we are a pair of fools.”

“Then don’t bother,” said Sir Jasper; “I tell you that I have put it all before Mary Maynard, and she is perfectly willing; as willing as a girl could be. I am very fond of her, and she is very fond of me. If it had not been for the poor woman who is dead, I would have married her before. I pointed out to Mary Maynard the great advantages of the match, and the fact that I could not possibly live long. Whereupon, to my intense delight,

she burst into a fury of tears, and said that I was not what she had thought me, but a wicked, cold-hearted little villain. The girl's heart is in the right place, Miss Evans, after all. I got her quieted, and had a special licence from the Archbishop at once. Come along, you and I together. We are both going to make fools of ourselves."

"I am not sure about that," said Aunt Eleanor.

There was a great crowd in Stretton churchyard. It had got about first that Captain Roland Evans was to be married to Miss Mordaunt, and that Major Edwardes, their old friend and neighbour, one of the greatest of Indian heroes, was to be his best man, along with Mr. Edward Evans and Captain James Mordaunt. Then it got about that Miss Evans was to be married to the Rector on the same day; and lastly, that Sir Jasper Meredith was to marry Miss Mary Maynard, of the Barton.

There was a great crowd. They hired omnibuses from Shrewsbury, and stood in rows on the grave-turf of the silent dead beneath

them, to look at these three boys, Roland, Eddy, and Jim, whom they had seen winning a foolish boat-race, as it were but yesterday, but had since, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, been into the fiery furnace of the Indian Mutiny, and had come out unscathed.

They all met in the church, coming from the Rectory, without seeing the populace, but the people knew that they were coming their way, for the carriages of half the county were at the lych-gate, and the Shropshire county gentry, a thing which will pass one supposes in time, which is a *good* thing as it stands, were crowding the churchyard, and making for the church.

The Dean and Aunt Eleanor were married first. Then came Roland and Ethel. Lastly, Sir Jasper and Mary Maynard. And if any bride ever looked happy, it was Mary Maynard. The only unhappy time she has had since she was married, was when she lost her first boy, but she has another now.

Then they all went into the vestry to sign the register, and Aunt Eleanor, leaving the Dean, took possession of Roland and Eddy, and bade them follow her. "Not you, Jim," she

said, as he prepared to come with them. And she took Roland and Eddy to a quiet place on the north side of the church, and showed them a well-executed brass, let in the wall, on which was written :—

In Memory of

ALLAN EVANS,

ELDEST SON OF THE LATE CAPTAIN CHARLES EVANS,
of this parish.

No man knows his grave, but one may believe that,
being a soldier in Christ's Army from his youth,
he rests with Christ's soldiers.

All his life long he fought for Christ's poor;
all his life long he wrestled with God in prayer, and in
the end, he gave his own life for a life he believed
to be more precious than his own.

CONCLUSION.

Now the registers were signed, and they began coming out. Edwardes, of Moulton, came first, and was received by the crowd in the churchyard with a murmur of familiar welcome. For he was a feather in their caps, and they loved him. To think that he is dead.

Then came Squire Mordaunt and his son Jim, with young Somes. They were instantly mobbed. Every one wanted, on a sudden, as it seemed, to shake hands with these three. The Squire was resplendent and glorious, and shook as many hands as he could get hold of, but kept saying "Room for the couples, men ; room for the couples !" And so they got through.

Then came Roland and Ethel. So wonderfully splendid in their beauty that the spectators down the churchyard kept a dead silence. It had pleased Roland to be married in his full-

dress uniform, and he was resplendent in scarlet and gold. Ethel had on the same arrangement of rich lace which I saw on a great banker's lady the other day, arranged somehow in her hair, and falling down all over her. The people were simply dumb with admiration.

Next came the Dean and Aunt Eleanor. They were certainly an old couple, but a very fine one, though the Dean was not handsome, and wore an innocent wig, without any concealment about it. There was a perfect roar of welcome for Aunt Eleanor. "God give you long days in the land, Madame Eleanor!" cried one. "God do to you, as you have done to us!" cried another. "You have the best wife in all England, sir," said another. And the Dean replied that he agreed with him entirely, and had known it all his life.

There came next Sir Jasper Meredith and Mary Maynard. Sir Jasper walked very well, and Mary looked very happy, the good Shropshire folks cheering them very heartily.

Before the last group came out of the church, Major Edwardes and young Somes, known to every one, had been about among the crowd,

and explained to them who was coming. Jasper Meredith and his wife were easily passed over. All eyes were turned to the church, to the most interesting group of the day.

First, Eddy and Jim, in full uniform, like Roland, side by side; there was no cheering now. The people wanted to get near them and see them closer, and at that moment, had such a thing been necessary, Jim and Eddy could have raised a battalion out of that churchyard. But they held up their hands for silence. The valley was mad about the Mordaunt hero and the Evans hero, but their curiosity overpowered their love, and they let their two heroes pass nearly in silence.

After them came a French lady, most beautifully dressed, on the arm of Maynard, explaining matters to him in a very voluble manner. But they only said "Go it, young Maynard," and let them pass on; for they noticed that Major Edwardes had gone back, that young Somes was standing in the centre of the path; that Jim and Eddy were waiting by the lychgate, and they knew that the man of the day was to come.

He came out of the church with Major Edwardes. A tall handsome gentleman, with a face a little browner than even "the Evans" and Mordaunt's, who had just passed by. A gentleman, clothed in snow-white from head to foot, wearing a small turban. About his breast and shoulders he had developed innumerable diamonds—diamonds worth enough to pay for a province, which made them shade their eyes as they flashed in the sun. It was the Nawab of Belpore.

He was instantly stopped. Young Some was terrified about his diamonds, as a lawyer should be; but not a soul in that Shropshire churchyard that morning would have touched one of them had it lay at his feet. Edwardes, Some, Eddy, and Jim kept the crowd away from him. And Major Edwardes said—

"Gentlemen, this is the Nawab of Belpore. Faithful to us in prosperity, faithful to us in adversity, faithful to us in despair. When we believed that all was lost, he was true. Look on a true, loyal Indian gentleman for once. He goes away to work at the greatest work ever undertaken by any nation yet, to carry out

among the one hundred and eighty millions of India this new civilization, originated by the revolutionary wars: epitomized by us. There is a work before us in India more vastly important than the work of Hun or Mogul. The Nawab will help us. Now let us go."

So ended the pageant, and so ends my seventh story. My boys were very dear to me, but they are passed into Shadow-land for ever: the two Mordaunts, the two Evanses, and Maynard. Of all the ghosts of old friends which I have called up in this quaint trade, called the writing of fiction, only two remain with me, and never quit me. The others come and go, and I love them well enough; but the two who are with me always are the peaked-faced man Charles Ravenshoe, and the lame French girl Mathilde.

THE END.



TINSLEY BROTHERS' NEW NOVELS

AT ALL LIBRARIES.

FALSE COLOURS. By ANNIE THOMAS (Mrs. PENDER CUDLIP), Author of "Denis Donne." 3 vols.

STRETTON. By HENRY KINGSLEY, Author of "Geoffrey Hamlyn," &c. 3 vols.

BREAKING A BUTTERFLY; or, Blanche Ellerslie's Ending. By the Author of "Guy Livingstone," &c. 3 vols.

NETHERTON-ON-SEA. A Story. 3 vols.

THE GIRL HE MARRIED. By JAMES GRANT. Author of "The Romance of War," "First Love and Last Love," &c. 3 vols.

IN SILK ATTIRE. By WILLIAM BLACK, Author of "Love or Marriage." 3 vols. Second Edition.

FOUND DEAD. By the Author of "Lost Sir Massingberd."

ALL BUT LOST. By G. A. HENTY, Author of "The March to Magdala." 3 vols.

A LONDON ROMANCE. By CHARLES H. ROSS. 3 vols.

HOME FROM INDIA. By JOHN POMEROY. 2 vols.

THE TOWN-TALK OF CLYDA. By the Author of "One Foot in the Grave." 2 vols.

JOHN TWILLER: a Romance of the Heart. By D. STARKEY, LL.D.

EQUAL TO EITHER FORTUNE. A Novel. By the Author of "A Man of Mark," &c. 3 vols.

UNDER LOCK AND KEY. A Novel. By THOMAS SPEIGHT, Author of "Brought to Light," &c. 3 vols.

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18, Catherine Street, Strand.

TINSLEY BROTHERS' NEW BOOKS.

AT ALL LIBRARIES.

ROME and VENICE ; with other WANDERINGS in ITALY in 1866-7. By GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA. 1 vol. 8vo.

THE LIFE OF EDMUND KEAN. From various Published and Original Sources. By F. W. HAWKINS. 2 vols. 8vo, price 30s.

"In all romance, in all literature, there is nothing more melancholy, nothing more utterly tragie, than the story of the career of Edmund Kean. So bitter and weary a struggle for a chance, so splendid and bewildering a success, so sad a waste of genius and fortune, so lamentable a fall, can hardly be found among all the records of the follies and sins and misfortunes of genius."—*Morning Star*.

A New Book of Travels by Captain R. F. BURTON.

EXPLORATIONS of the HIGHLANDS of the BRAZIL; with a full Account of the Gold and Diamond Mines; also Canoeing down Fifteen Hundred Miles of the Great River Sao Francisco from Sabara to the Sea. By Captain RICHARD F. BURTON, F.R.G.S., &c., &c. 2 vols. 8vo, with Maps and Illustrations, 30s.

THE NIGHT SIDE OF LONDON. By J. EWING RITCHIE, Author of "British Senators," &c. New and enlarged Edition, 1 vol., 7s. 6d.

MAXIMS BY A MAN OF THE WORLD. By the Author of "Lost Sir Massingberd." 1 vol., 7s. 6d.

ENGLISH PHOTOGRAPHS. By AN AMERICAN. 8vo, 12s.

MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE AND REIGN OF GEORGE III. With Original Letters of the King, and other Unpublished MSS. By J. HENEAGE JESSE, Author of "The Court of England under the Stuarts," &c. 3 vols. 8vo, £2 2s. Second Edition.

"The very nature of his subject has given these volumes a peculiar interest."—*Times*.

"Here, however, we must part with Mr. Jesse, not without renewed thanks for the amusement which he has given us."—*Quarterly Review*.

"Mr. Jesse's volumes are brimful of amusement and interest."—*Spectator*.

"Mr. Jesse's book is one to be eagerly read, and enjoyed to a degree rarely experienced in the perusal of English memoirs."—*Morning Post*.

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18, Catherine Street, Strand.



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

RECD ED-HEI
AUG 1 1989

JGV
AUG 21 1988

PRESENT

11 995
m/cuy

Form L9-25m-9, 41 (A0010/44)

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES



L 005 413 507 4

PR
4845
K5st
v.3

